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MACREADY'S

REMINISCENCES,

AND SELECTIONS FROM

HIS DIARIES AND LETTERS.

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REMINISCENCES,

AND SELECTIONS FROM

HIS DIARIES AND LETTERS.

24409.
a.c.

In the character of Henry IV.

JAMOLAL

EDITED

BY SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK, BART.,

ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

London:

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1875.

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WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.

High-souled, and in the law of duty strong
With toil to climb the steep and narrow ways
Which upward lead, it was no common praise
To live in clear sense of the right and wrong
Of his vocation, and his life-time long
To war against the baseness which betrays
The cause of honest excellence; his days
Spent in devoted study; from the throng
Of fashion-fawners dwelling far apart:
A sterling gentleman; great when he played
In England's noble drama, and the still
House wept, or loud applauded, as its heart
He wrought, and with imperious passion swayed
The reins of the full theatre at will.

EDITOR.

MACREADY'S REMINISCENCES.

"Quam potius laudandus hic est, quem prole paratâ
Occupat in parvâ pigra senecta casâ:
* * * *
Sic ego sim; liceatque caput candescere canis,
Temporis et prisci facta referre senem!"
Tibullus, lib. i. Eleg. 10, v. 39.

"Blest is his lot whom years advancing find
With children round him, and of frugal state:
* * * *
Such would I be, though whitening locks remind
Of age, and of old times old men will prate."—ED. TRANS.

CHAPTER I.

1793–1808.—Earliest recollections—Preparatory schools at Kensington and Birmingham—School mutiny—Father's theatre at Birmingham—King—Mrs. Siddons—Mrs. Billington—Lord Nelson at the theatre—Visit to relations at Dublin—Adventure at Chester—Entrance at Rugby—School life—Dr. Inglis—Fagging—Mother's death—School theatricals—The young Roscius—Rapid rise in the school—Unmerited punishment—William Birch—Fight with a bully—Dr. Wooll—Rugby speeches—More elaborate theatricals—Edmund Kean at Birmingham.

MARY STREET, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, 3RD MARCH, 1793.

IF I am to select occurrences out of those which have befallen me, my judgment may err from many natural motives in the choice between such as I record and those I may omit. It will therefore probably be more judicious in me to refrain from any exercise of my discrimination in this rough draft of my life's accidents, and, beginning at the beginning, to note down all I

can remember, even in my infancy, of impressions, feelings, and incidents, reserving the task of sifting and deciding upon what may be worth preserving to a period when I can review the whole (should it be God's will I live to do it), and perceive the relation that small things may bear to the greater events of my history. The dim remembrance of my earliest years makes it certain to me that the "res angusta domi" called into active duty all the economical resources and active management of a mother (whose memory is enshrined in my heart's fondest gratitude) to supply the various wants of myself and an elder sister, who only lived long enough to make me sensible of her angelic nature. Four children had been born to my father before my birth, but this sister, Olivia, was the only one who survived long enough for association with my recollections. She was a year and a half old when I came into the world, and died a month after I had completed my fifth year; but she lives, like a dim and far-off dream, to my memory, of a spirit of meekness, love, and truth, interposing herself between my infant will and the evil it purposed. It is like a vision of an angelic influence upon a most violent and self-willed disposition. I do not remember her disappearance from amongst us, though I retain clear ideas of herself.

Infant-schools were a boon not then conferred on our generation, or I was quite young enough to have been among their little crowds when I was first "got out of the way," and for a time out of mischief, by being carried to a day-school. My childhood and boyhood henceforth were all school; and it is even now with sorrow, deep and stern, that I reflect upon the companionship into which I was cast in those tender years. To God my thoughts revert in penitential gratitude for my escape from many ills into which I might have been led by the depravity of associates among whom, an innocent child, I was then thrown. As it was, much unhappiness in after life resulted from ideas communicated by the vulgar-minded boys who were herded together under indifferent teachers at these preparatory schools. I can remember the fare to have been to my palate, not then over nice, actually disgusting. But I had holidays, and a mother's love to welcome me home with tears of joy; and these happy variations of my drudging days stand out in pleasing relief through this obscure period.

From a preparatory school at Kensington, where we were dressed in uniform of scarlet jacket, blue or nankeen trousers, I was removed, for about three years, to one in St. Paul's Square, Birmingham, kept by a Mr. Edgell, a violent-tempered man, with small pretensions to the discharge of the office he had undertaken. In those days, however, he had a sort of local reputation, although his title to "the Revd.," prefixed to his name, was generally disputed, and assertions were very confidently made that he had laboured on a shop-board previous to his setting up as schoolmaster. The interval of a few weeks between my translation from one school to the other was passed at Cheltenham. My journey there differed somewhat from modern travelling. Leaving London with my father about noon by the Long Coach (a sort of clumsy omnibus), reaching Oxford after midnight, to supper in the kitchen of the inn, on beef (which I remember my father indignantly denounced as of *mauvaise odeur*), we arrived at Cheltenham in something less than twenty-four hours.

This populous and handsomely-laid-out town was then little more than one long street, with a few intersecting smaller ones. The Well Walk (or as it is now called, the Royal Old Wells) then was crowded in the early morning with visitors parading up and down after their daily dose of the waters. My inevitable tumbler, very unwillingly taken, and a little aviary near the little theatre, belonging to a Mr. Watson, make up the sum-total of my recollections of the place. At my new school I certainly made progress in arithmetic, having gone through Bonnycastle more than twice before I was ten years old. But recitation was my forte; in English Grammar and Reading I stood in the first class. Milton and Young being two of our school-books, I had to learn by heart long extracts from them, from Akenside, Pope, and pieces from 'Enfield's Speaker'—including Sterne, Thomson, Keate, Shakespeare, &c., which have been of some service to me in accustoming my ear to the enjoyment of the melody of rhythm. To cure me of the habit of misplacing my *h*'s, my dear mother, I remember, took especial pains, and in teaching me Dryden's 'Alexander's Feast,' the line, as I pronounced it, "'Appy, 'Appy, 'Appy Pair!" was for some time an insuperable obstacle to progress. I have distinct impressions of certain states of feeling under various

events at this early period. A very strong will, headlong impulse, and a very loving disposition are evidenced to me in the several little occurrences that live before me as I look back to these childish days.

My facility in learning was remarked, and my power of retention was singular. My reading-books were very few, so that a Grecian, Roman, and English History, a selection from Plutarch, Tooke's 'Pantheon,' and the proper names at the end of the dictionaries, were read over and over again; but Pope's Homer was almost learned by heart. The production of a play was suggested by some of the bigger boys, and it was fixed to be 'Cato;' but no progress was made in it beyond my learning the part of Juba, and the boy who undertook that of Syphax, with the scenery and decorations, half finishing the crown I was to wear.

There was a general spirit of mutiny awakened in the minds of the boys by some of the bigger ones, the aim and effect of which was, as I recollect, a determination to influence the parents in all ways to remove us from under Edgell's care, and a declared aversion to the Dionysius of our little state. The discovery of this insubordination brought down punishment and penitence upon the ring-leaders during an illness, a violent attack of the mumps, that confined me from school; and upon my return I, a very little boy, just ten years old, though at the head of the school, and a favourite of the dreaded tyrant, found myself a solitary conspirator! Upon occasion of an harangue from the despot, which concluded with his avowed determination to "make every boy obey him" —I muttered in my distant desk, "I'll be hanged if I'll obey you." A pardoned rebel near me, hearing the words, instantly denounced me. I was called up and questioned, and stood to what I had said. The consequence was inevitable; the master left the schoolroom to bring his birch out of a more distant apartment. I seized the occasion, and darted out of the schoolroom door. The yell of the recreant traitors, "He is gone! he is gone!" put the long-legged Polypheme in swift pursuit. I had, in my bewilderment, rushed up instead of down the hill, and was soon grasped in the fangs of the remorseless Edgell, who pounced upon me like a kite upon a tomtit in its crazy flight. Condign punishment was

mercilessly inflicted, and I remember I was treated with indignity by the very same big boys who had seduced me from my allegiance.

My great amusement in my summer holidays at Birmingham was in seeing plays and in acting some of my own composition with my brother and sisters. In my father's dressing-room I had a glimpse of King, dressed as Lord Ogleby, of which character he was the original representative, and distinguished for its performance in Garrick's day. The grand deportment and beauty of Mrs. Siddons were engraven on my boyish memory, though then unable justly to estimate her powers. Lewis's face, then seen, I have never forgotten, although what I have known of his acting has been entirely from description. I had the opportunity, too, of hearing the great songstress of her day, Mrs. Billington. For a week the theatre was every night crowded, as people say, to suffocation, but I can only recall the figure of a very lusty woman, and the excitement of the audience, when the orchestra struck up the symphony of Arne's rattling bravura, 'The Soldier tired,' in the opera of 'Artaxerxes.'

But one evening (in giving me a sight of the man with whose fame all Europe rang, and who will for ever rank first among the first of our country's naval heroes) stands out in my memory as marked with golden letters. During the short peace of Amiens, Nelson made a tour through several of our provincial towns—a recreation apparently innocent enough, but which was harshly reflected on in the House of Lords. Birmingham was one of those he visited, and I believe my memory does not err in stating that the people drew his carriage, or attempted to draw it, from the suburbs to his hotel. The news of his arrival spread like wildfire, and when his intention of going to the theatre got wind, all who heard of it, as might have been expected, flocked there to behold, and do him honour. The play was Shakespeare's 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' for the benefit of a player of the name of Blissett, who had some repute in the part of Falstaff. At my father's request Lord Nelson consented to bespeak for the next night the play of 'King Henry IV.,' wishing to see Blissett again in Falstaff. The box-office was literally besieged early the next morning, and every place soon taken. At the hour of commencement my father was waiting with candles to

conduct the far-famed hero through the lobby, which went round the whole semicircle of the lower tier, to his box. The shouts outside announced the approach of the carriage: the throng was great, but being close to my father's side, I had not only a perfect view of the hero's pale and interesting face, but listened with such eager attention to every word he uttered, that I had all he said by heart, and for months afterwards was wont to be called upon to repeat "what Lord Nelson said to your father." This was in substance to the effect that the universal esteem in which his, my father's, character was held in the town made it a pleasure and a duty to render him any assistance.

Nothing of course passed unnoticed by my boyish enthusiasm: the right-arm empty sleeve attached to his breast, the orders upon it, a sight to me so novel and remarkable; but the melancholy expression of his countenance and the extremely mild and gentle tones of his voice impressed me most sensibly. They were indeed for a life's remembrance. When with Lady Hamilton and Dr. Nelson he entered his box, the uproar of the house was deafening, and seemed as if it would know no end. The play was at length suffered to proceed, after which was a sort of divertisement in honour of the illustrious visitor, from one song of which I can even now recollect one couplet! Oh sacred Nine, forgive me while I quote it!

> "We'll shake hands, and be friends; if they won't, why, what then?
> We'll send our brave Nelson to thrash 'em again.
> Derry Down," &c.

The crowded house was frantic in its applause at this sublime effusion. Lady Hamilton, laughing loud and without stint, clapped with uplifted hands and all her heart, and kicked with her heels against the foot-board of the seat, while Nelson placidly and with his mournful look (perhaps in pity for the poet) bowed repeatedly to the oft-repeated cheers. Next day my father called at the hotel to thank his Lordship, when Nelson presented him with what he intended to be the cost of his box wrapped in paper, regretting that his ability to testify his respect for my father was so much below his will. My father never told me the amount, but purchased with it a piece of plate that he retained to his death in memory of the donor. I should not omit to mention that in the hall of the hotel were

several sailors of Nelson's ship waiting to see him, to each of whom the great admiral spoke in the most affable manner, inquiringly and kindly, as he passed through to his carriage, and left them, I believe, some tokens of his remembrance.

My winter vacations were usually spent at the houses of friends, where my chief diversion was lying on a sofa and reading novels. At the close of the half-year in which this formidable rebellion took place, I was removed from the school by my dear mother, who, if I remember rightly, exerted her spirit in giving a very severe rebuke to my quondam master. She had been of late years an invalid, and had tried the air of different watering-places in the quest of her lost strength; but in vain. She was on her way from Clifton to Bolton-le-Moors, to rejoin my father, resting at Birmingham, from whence, glad to turn my back on the grim Edgell, though with the fear of Rugby before my eyes, I accompanied her. Our mode of travelling, post-chaise and pair, was tedious, when bribes to the postillion could rarely get you beyond seven miles an hour. We reached Congleton at dusk, where my dear mother's illness detained us for the night. I can remember now the agony of heart with which I went into the street of the strange town to find a druggist's shop, where I might buy some ether, choking with tears and running in trembling haste with the medicine. How I recollect the load lifted off my heart when the maid told me she was really better. The next morning she was able to pursue her journey, and passing through Manchester, we reached the town of Bolton-le-Moors, which, I remember, was regarded as a semi-barbarous place. I may be mistaken, but the impression is on my mind that it was not lighted. I recollect the uncouth dialect of the people, and a savage mode the labouring people were said to have of settling their quarrels—viz. by "purring," i.e. the combatant, when his adversary was down, kicking him on the head with his wooden-soled shoe. Lodgings, streets, everything seemed on a low scale; I have little doubt but that now it is a handsome town with its institutions and civic government all *en règle*.

The small theatre held by my father was nightly filled with people from Manchester to see the comedy of 'John Bull,'

at that same time performing with great success at Covent Garden. The author, Geo. Colman the Younger, as he subscribes himself, was one evening in the theatre at Bolton, at the representation of his own play. My father had obtained by great favour a copy of the MS. from the proprietors of the Covent Garden Theatre, and boasted of being the only manager out of the metropolis who could give the performance. Colman offered good terms, for his theatre in the Haymarket to three of the actors; but my father stood on his dignity, and not having been first applied to, refused his permission, without which they all three most loyally refused to treat.

From Bolton I was taken by my parents to Dublin, travelling post to Holyhead; I recollect well the comfort of the inns, the good fare, the clean rooms, and the difficulty of the roads, my first view of the sea, of which I had I know not what kind of previous vague idea from reciting at Edgell's school Keate's 'Address to the Ocean.' A fast-sailing trim-built cutter, with very good cabin, took us over in the course of the night; in the morning we were lying off, waiting for water to cross the bar; but my father took me in a boat, a pull of about two miles, to the Pigeon House. As well as I remember, our visit in Dublin was to my grandfather, a venerable old gentleman, one of the most respectable tradesmen in the city, and greatly esteemed as the father of the corporation. In my short visit there was much to impress my boyish readiness to see wonders in every novelty. The city itself, its squares and streets, so proudly vaunted by my relations, Dame Street, Sackville Street, Stephen's Green, the buildings—Custom House, Four Courts, Rotundo—were all sights to me; but Christ Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral interested me more, by the banners of the knights in the one and the tomb of Strongbow in the other, than the unsightly building called the Castle or Werburgh Church, which was spoken of with peculiar reverence, because attended by the Lord Lieutenant. I was taken twice to the theatre, once on the occasion of a command, and saw there actors whom in my own professional days I met again—Holman, R. Jones of Covent Garden, and others, who remained like limpets stuck to the Dublin Theatre. My grandfather at parting gave me a present which was laid out in plate for me by my dear mother, and my uncle presented me with

Leland's 'History of Ireland,' in three volumes, which still keeps its place in my library.

We re-crossed to Holyhead on our return; our journey was marked by no event that rested on my memory beyond the draught I took of St. Winifred's Well at Holywell, and the avidity with which I listened to the number of gallons it gave out per hour, and the innumerable cures it effected, attested as they were by the crutches suspended as votive offerings beneath the groined arches of the Gothic roof above it. At Chester, the races completely filled the city; the streets were swarming as we passed through. Wishing to see friends of my mother's, Captain and Mrs. Harrison, who lived a mile out of the town, my father drove to their house, and giving the post-boy a very large fee to see the luggage put on another chaise, sent me back in the chaise to the hotel to take care that the luggage was all rightly transferred. The post-boy called for horses, but not a horse was to be had—"None in" was the answer at the hotel; he unharnessed his own pair, and left me with the luggage in and on the chaise exposed in the open and crowded street. My agony lest the luggage should be stolen and my fear of my father's displeasure were great. I went—obliged to leave the chaise—into the stables at a distance down some dirty lanes, and with tears implored the post-boy to get me horses; but he had got his recompense, and repelled me very brutally. At the hotel they were too much engaged to attend to me. What to do I did not know; in despair at last I set off upon as fast a run as I could make—dreading to see my father, but with no alternative—not knowing my way, but with a faint guess at the direction in which it lay, and remembering the slated side of Captain Harrison's house. The day was a broiling one. Of some of the most good-natured looking I inquired my way, but unsatisfactorily; still I ran on, my face streaming with perspiration, and at last caught sight of the slated side. My mother was astonished at my condition, bathed in tears as I was, and soothing my agitation, bade me explain it all to my father, who received the news very indulgently, and going down to the town, after a long absence returned with a chaise which he had great difficulty in procuring.

Birmingham was the most important of the towns of which my father held the theatres, and there we soon arrived. The

summer months were passed there, diversified by a short stay at Leamington, then a small village, consisting only of a few thatched houses, not one tiled or slated, the Bowling-green Inn being the only one where very moderate accommodation could be procured. There was in process of erection an hotel of more pretension, which I fancy was to be the Dog or Greyhound, but which had some months of work to fit it for reception of guests. We had the parlour and bedrooms of a huckster's shop, the best accommodation in the place, and used each morning to walk down to the spring across the churchyard with our little mugs in our hands for our daily draught of the Leamington waters.

The time arrived for my departure to Rugby, and to me, though I had been on a visit there at my cousin's a year before, it was a dreary prospect. The accounts I had heard of the severity practised, the numbers amongst whom I should be cast, the utter ignorance of the usages there, the want of sympathetic counsel —for my father was himself uninformed on such subjects—all weighed on me with feelings of dread and depression, of which a life's events have not obliterated the recollection. My parting with my dear mother was to me a sad one, the last living look I had of her on earth. My father took me in a gig to Coventry, and thence in a chaise to Rugby. When left there, at my cousin Birch's boarding-house, I was indeed alone. Most fortunately I had a bedroom, roomy and commodious, almost to myself. One of my cousins slept there, but scarcely ever intruded on my solitude; for having no cupboard in "the Hall" to keep my books, I had my little library, consisting of an abridgment of Plutarch's Lives, Tooke's 'Pantheon,' Pope's Homer, the 'History of Ireland,' and Mentor's 'Letters to Youth'—the last parting gift of my beloved mother—in my bedroom; and used to read over and over the well-conned pages of these volumes, all of which except the 'Pantheon' I to this day possess. My fears of the severity with which I had been threatened made me diligent, and the work seemed to me easy—being kept back from the place I should have occupied in the school under the necessity of perfecting myself in the "Propria quæ maribus," "Quæ genus," and "As in præsenti" of the Eton Grammar. Arithmetic was no task to me, having been put back to the rule of three, and being really more advanced than any even

of the sixth form in that all-important branch of knowledge, of which I lost much at Rugby that I had acquired at Edgell's.

I was the last but three on the school-list, "Macready, Daniel, Fosbrooke, Wright," ended the callings-over. The system of bullying seemed to have banished humanity from most of the boys above me, or rather of those between me and the highest forms. I was fag to a young man of the name of Ridge, an Irishman, who was a very harsh task-master; and I was made so uncomfortable in the common Hall, that but for the refuge of my own snug bedroom I should have been utterly despondent. As it was, I wrote such letters home that my father more than once thought he must send for me. But my dear mother's representations, that I fared only in common with other boys, and that her cousin Birch would not suffer me to be ill-treated, subdued my father's uneasiness. Yet, from the bullying endured, the first year of my term was real misery, so that my lessons, in which I was always perfect, so easy were they to me, became something like a refuge to me. After surmounting the difficulties of the Eton Grammar, my course through the school was rapid beyond precedent. I attained the fifth form in three years, from which advance I began to be sensible of a certain enjoyment of my position.

In the early period of my Rugby course Dr. Inglis was the headmaster: a pale, ascetic-looking man, whose deportment was grave, dignified, and awe-inspiring: the clicking of the latch of the door by which he entered the Upper Schoolroom instantly produced a silence like a chill; and the "boldest held his breath for a time." It was in the deepest hush of both Upper and Lower Schools that the sound of his tread was distinctly heard, or that his voice echoed through the halls, as he gave out on a Thursday morning the name or names of the boys whose exercises entitled them to the honour of "Play," i.e. of obtaining for the school one of the half-holidays of the week.

To give some idea of the abuse of power by the præpostors, or sixth-form boys, an incident at the very beginning of my school days will be sufficient. One morning, in passing through the schools, "the Doctor," or "Inglis"—according to whom his title might be addressed—was followed by a boy about fourteen years of age, in deep mourning. This boy, whose

name was Crowther, had been expelled the half-year before, and on this occasion the Doctor read a letter from him (generally believed to be in his mother's writing) expressing his contrition for his fault, mentioning his aggravated distress under the recent loss of his father, and begging to be restored. The letter brought tears into the eyes of several of the boys, and Inglis pronounced his public pardon and his restoration to his place. His offence was having been sent (fagged) by his (præpostor) master to Grime's Spinnys, about two and a half miles distant, to steal ash-plants to be beaten with. There was no resource—he was seen by Inglis as he passed in his carriage, and being questioned "who had sent him," he refused to give the name of his tyrant. A box on the ear was the punishment of his contumacy, and on his saying he "was not to be struck," and persisting in his refusal to give up the name of his superior, he underwent immediate expulsion. One of the —— a short time before had held the back of his fag to the fire so long in torture, that the poor fellow, who was still during my time at school in the fourth form, was seriously ill, and his brutal master flogged severely for his atrocious conduct.

The longest day, however, will have an end, and though the short half-year was so unhappily lengthened to me, it reached the holidays at last; and with a party in a chaise I arrived at Leicester, where I was to sleep at a friend's house that night, Saturday, I remember, and to proceed in the Leeds mail next morning to Sheffield, where my father's company was then performing. The mail I had for the whole long journey to myself, dining by myself at the Black's Head, in Nottingham and, but for the thought that every mile brought me nearer home, the day would have been a melancholy one. We had left Leicester at ten o'clock in the morning, and eleven at night was the time at which we reached Sheffield—a journey which in the present day would occupy, I fancy, about two hours, or two hours and a half! I had no difficulty in finding my father's lodgings in Norfolk Street, and on inquiring for my parents, was taken up to my father, who was in bed, and, as they told me, ill. He had not expected me, having written to our friend at Leicester to detain me there some days. I asked for my dear mother, and he told me she

was gone away for a little, and that I could not see her that night. The night was one of thoughtless rest to me; but the morning brought with it tidings of an event that has been ever since a memory of sorrow to me. That mother whom I had so longed to see, so dear, so precious, was gone indeed. My father informed me that she had died the day before my return. I had the mournful comfort of looking on her in her placid sleep, and through succeeding years that image of tranquillity and love has not left me. It was a house of mourning in which my holidays were spent. I followed her to the grave, which I have often, always in passing through Sheffield, remembered and revisited. In a newspaper of that period these lines were published shortly after her death:

"The following impromptu will not be deemed inappropriate, as it is written from the heart, in the full force of its feelings, by one who knew her well, and who faithfully declares that however deficient it may be in poetical merit he has not deviated in a single line from the rigid maxim of 'De mortuis nil nisi verum.'

"EPITAPH

"ON MRS. MACREADY, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 3RD OF "DECEMBER, 1803.

"If 'tis decreed the virtuous and the just
Shall rise to bliss triumphant from the dust,
And human forms shall from this dross refine
To join the ethereal host in forms divine,
Then shall those dear corporeal remains,
Which now the cold and silent grave contains,
Once more embrace that soul, which heaven approved
(Though sharply chastened as it dearly loved),
That mind, where virtue fixed her seated reign,
Yet probed its votary with disease and pain;
That head, which framed no base insidious wile,
Friend to deceive or enemy beguile;
That hand, whose frugal and domestic care
Still saved a surplus for the poor to share;
That heart, which self-indulgence oft withstood
T' enjoy the 'luxury of doing good.'
That soul, that mind, that head, that hand and heart,
Then re-united, never more to part,
All glorious rising, shall enraptured sing,
'Where, Grave, thy victory? Where, Death, thy sting?'
And those, her nearest and her dearest, left,
Of their most valued friend on earth bereft—

If haply left to shape their future lives
By the best mother and the best of wives,
Tracing her footsteps through this world of cares,
And making her revered example theirs,
When they have 'shuffled off this mortal coil,'
And passed life's rugged pilgrimage and toil,
Shall to her blessed abode then wing their way,
And, spurning the grim tyrant's ended sway,
Share her bright crown in realms of endless day."

My return to Rugby soon began to make me, as it were, more acclimated to its atmosphere, and I now began my rapid rush through the school. One amusement of the bigger boys was in getting up plays, which were acted to their school-fellows in one of the boarding-houses, Bucknill's. They were very fairly done, only that it was necessary at the end of every scene to drop the curtain in order to change one for another. In the course of time these plays were removed to a sort of hall at the School-house called the "Over School," the reading and sitting-room of the School-house fifth and sixth form boys. It opened into a large bed-room, which went by the name of "Paradise," with nine beds appropriated to the head boys, and was very convenient to the actors for dressing and undressing. The actors in these plays made application through me to my father for the loan of books, and afterwards for dresses, with which, to their great delight, he readily furnished them. In grateful testimony they considered themselves obliged to give me, although in the Under School, parts in their performances, and my theatrical career at Rugby was begun as prompter—a distinguished post for an Under School boy; and I ran through the characters of Dame Ashfield in 'Speed the Plough,' Mrs. Brulgruddery in 'John Bull,' the Jew in Dibdin's 'School for Prejudice,' and Briefwit in the farce of 'Weathercock.'

When Dr. Inglis retired from the head-mastership, to be succeeded by Dr. Wooll, I had made some progress in the school, having reached the fifth form. I recollect one day, when playing at foot-ball in the school close, Dr. Inglis was walking on the gravel walk that surrounds it. He called me to him, and desiring me to "keep on my hat," continued his walk with me by his side. He inquired of me what my father designed for me. I told him that I was intended for the law. He continued:

"Have you not thought of your father's profession?"

"No, sir."

"Should you not like it?"

"No, sir, I should wish to go to the bar."

"Are you quite certain you should not wish to go on the stage?"

"Quite certain, sir; I very much dislike it, and the thought of it."

"Well," he added, "I am glad of it. But if you had had any thoughts that way I should have wished to give you some advice, which I am glad to believe is now unnecessary."

I held him in great respect, and liked him very much, stern and inaccessible as he seemed to all of us. During his term of office the subject of the French invasion engrossed all thoughts, and monopolised conversation. The whole country was armed, drilled, and well accoutred, and Rugby furnished its two companies of well-equipped, well-marshalled volunteers. The elder boys had their blue coats cuffed and collared with scarlet, and exercised after school-hours with heavy wooden broad-swords. Nothing was talked of but Bonaparte and invasion. Suddenly a wonderful boy, a miracle of beauty, grace, and genius, who had acted in Belfast and Edinburgh, became the theme of all discourse. My father had brought him to England, and his first engagement was at Birmingham, where crowded houses applauded his surprising powers to the very echo. In London, at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, throughout the whole country, "the young Roscius" became a rage, and in the *furore* of public admiration the invasion ceased to be spoken of. He acted two nights at Leicester, and on a half-holiday, my cousin Birch having sent a note to excuse me and his eldest son from the afternoon's callings-over, at my father's request Tom Birch and myself were smuggled into a chaise, and reached Leicester in time for the play—'Richard III.' The house was crowded. John Kemble and H. Harris, son of the Patentee of Covent Garden, sat in the stage box immediately behind us. I remember John Kemble's hankerchief strongly scented of lavender, and his observation, in a very compassionate tone, "Poor boy! he is very hoarse." I could form little judgment of the performance, which excited universal enthusiasm, and in the tempest of which we were of course borne along. In subsequent engage-

ments with my father we became playfellows, and off the stage W. H. West Betty was a boy with boys, as full of spirits, fun, and mischief as any of his companions, though caressed, fondled, and idolised by peeresses, and actually besieged for a mere glimpse of him by crowds at his hotel door. An instance of the "madness that ruled the hour" was given at Dunchurch, where he stopped to dine and sleep, being prevented from acting at Coventry in Passion Week by Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. One of the leading families in the county, who were on their way to Coventry to see him, were stopped by the news at Dunchurch. The lady begged and entreated the landlord to get her a sight of "the young Roscius." She would "give anything." The landlord, unwilling to disoblige his patrons, suggested that there was but one way in which her wish could be gratified: "Mr. and Mrs. Betty and their son were just going to dinner, and if she chose to carry in one of the dishes she could see him, but there was no other way." The lady, very grateful in her acknowledgments, took the dish, and made one of the waiters at table. I mention this as one among the numerous anecdotes of his popularity. The Prince of Wales made him handsome presents, and in short he engrossed all tongues. After the play at Leicester Tom Birch and myself got into our chaise, and travelling through the night, reached Rugby in good time for "first lesson" in the morning.*

It has been said, and I believe it, that if the humblest in the social scale were to note down accurately the events of his life, the impressions he had received, and the real motives that actuated him in all he might have done, the narration would convey instruction, if not entertainment. This rough draft of the incidents of my life may never go beyond the circle of my own family, but in remarking the cause of those errors, which will be found to abound in it, whether originating in myself, induced by culpable example, or resulting from mistaken instruction, lessons may be learned and experience obtained that may serve as beacons to those I love and leave behind me, and which may prove, as I pray to God they may, in some slight degree expiatory of the faults here registered. With this purpose in

* The "Young Roscius" survived Macready, and died in London 24th August, 1874, in his 83rd year.—ED.

view I have, after some deliberation, resolved not to omit even those trifling circumstances of my boyhood to which may be traced some of the delinquencies of my maturer life. "The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day," and in the misfortune of that temper which through life has been the cause of my greatest unhappiness, and with which I have struggled so repeatedly, I see in its early outbreaks the prognostics of those ebullitions of passion that have so frequently caused me great suffering, and have brought with them deep repentance. But none deceive us so much as we ourselves, and with all my earnest resolves, I may very possibly, though undesignedly, in relation colour facts in tenderness to my own portion of blame, or view in the light of prejudice the conduct of others engaged with me. Let me hope that I shall hold to that severe rule of truth which I have always laboured to inculcate in you, my dear children.

The rapidity of my onward course in the school was unchecked; but the spirit with which I worked at my advancement became darkened by an occurrence that reduced me to a level which I had gloried in feeling myself above. The question has been long disputed of the effect produced on boys by corporal punishment. How far it may be necessary where minds are insensible to better influences, I cannot say; but where emulation exists, and the ambition that must pre-suppose a dread and horror of disgrace glows in a youthful breast, I am confident the degradation of corporal punishment may not unfrequently excite a feeling of desperate recklessness, bring about the subversion of all better principles, and break down a barrier against evil that may possibly never be re-established.

In the expression of this opinion I am not going to offer any palliation of my own misdoings, but to recall the facts as they occurred. I had reached the top of the lower fourth form without the disgrace of corporal punishment, and it was thought by the boys around me, and it was one hope of my ambition, that I should pass through the school unscathed personally or morally by this degrading infliction. One morning the news current in the boy's hall at our boarding-house (my cousin Birch's) was the "great fun" of the preceding evening, when a boy, half a fool, of the name of J——, had been made drunk by ——, ——, and ——, with the Hall beer, and had exhibited

most ridiculous antics, to their great amusement. "The fun" was to be repeated the following night, and I with some others, who had not been present, went into the Hall, after locking up, to see what was proceeding. The boys plied the foolish fellow with mugs of the "swipes," and then hustled him about to accelerate the effects of his draughts. I had no hand whatever in the business. The result was that the boy was very sick, and the affair was repeated to Birch. The boy in his stupefied state was questioned, and he gave my name with those of the real delinquents. I was afterwards informed that my name was sent up to Dr. Inglis, on which I went to Birch to protest my innocence, and to offer testimony to the fact that my culpability was that of many others, viz. being present on the occasion. Birch very sternly repelled me, telling me I might explain to Dr. Inglis what I had to say. The præpostor the next day at lessons came for me, and I was conducted by him to the Doctor's School, where the condemned were. I assured the Doctor that I was free from any participation in the offence beyond being present. His answer was, "Macready, I am very sorry to see you here, but Mr. Birch has 'sent you up' (the term in use) and I must whip you." Returning to my form smarting with choking rage and indignation, where I had to encounter the compassion of some and the envious jeers of others, my passion broke out in the exclamation, "D—n old Birch! I wish he was in h—ll!"

I was now indeed criminal; but I felt as if I cared for nothing. William Birch, my tutor's son and my third cousin, was present, and would, I knew, report me to his father, which I fancy I almost wished. My anguish and the fury of my heart blinded me to everything else. It had been Birch's custom to have me every Sunday to "dine in the parlour," a very great indulgence; but this was only one among the many many proofs he gave me of his partiality to me. On the following Sunday as we took our places at dinner in the Hall, where Mrs. Birch superintended the distribution of the fare, the man-servant came to me with the usual message, "Macready, you are to dine in the parlour." I would not stir. He repeated his message three or four times, till I said, "I shall not go;" when Mrs. Birch took the word: "Let him alone, Thomas, if he doesn't choose." Thenceforward I felt indifferent what might befall me. I could not have gone

into the parlour after what I had been guilty of saying of my benefactor, and I joined with other boys in pranks that I should before have been careful to avoid. It is an evil sign in our nature, which I could not but perceive, that it was an evident satisfaction to some among them that I had fallen from my "pride of place." I learnt my lessons, because they were easy to me, and in the course of a few weeks I was translated to the upper fourth, my cousin Birch's form.

He was the most severe, but the most liked of all the masters. His undeviating system was, if a boy, called up at lesson, made a mistake, to give him a light imposition; upon a second omission he increased the imposition; upon a third the inexorable words were, "Sit down, you need not do your punishments." The name was given to the præpostor of the form, and the incapable was flogged. I went with dread to take my place in his form. With stern rigour he blended encouragement, and each Saturday those boys who had acquitted themselves well during the week were "sent up for good." "To be sent up for good" was to receive through the præpostor of the form sixpence in the Lower School, and a shilling the Upper; and it became almost a regular income to me to receive two and three shillings a week as, charged in the bills, "merit money." He had never spoken to me since my disgrace, and it was with astonishment I learned from the præpostor on the first Saturday that I was "sent up for good," and was the only one in the form so distinguished.

Some time after my father passed through Rugby, and of course went to see Birch. I was sent for into the parlour, and there my dear and good friend (for such he was to his dying day) related to my father with tears in his eyes my behaviour. I had been guiltless of the first offence, which the poor half-idiot lad had acknowledged afterwards; but the belief of Birch had been that the beer had been drugged, that tobacco had been put into it for the purpose of intoxicating the boy, without which the offence could scarcely have been considered a penal one, and in his anger, which was sometimes hasty, he would not pause for inquiry. I repeated the assurance of my innocence of the fault ascribed to me, and with an overcharged heart expressed my contrition for my ungrateful forgetfulness

of all his kindness to me. It was understood that he forgave me, and I returned to a better sense of my duty. I was afterwards occasionally, and not unfrequently, invited into the parlour, but the regular Sunday dinners, where I was as one of his family, were not resumed. I may say with one of Cumberland's characters, "My passions were my masters," and even in reaching the "years that bring the philosophic mind" I have had to continue the conflict with them.

It was in the lower fourth form an incident occurred which caused some amusement in the school. Upon some absurd pretence a very bullying boy, by name B——, affected to take umbrage at some words or action (I remember we could not divine the meaning of his irritation) alleged by him against myself and another of our house, Jeston, on which he sent us a challenge to fight us both together that evening. Being both of us of his own age and size, it seemed excessively ridiculous, and in accepting his cartel I told Jeston that I would fight him first, and if he thrashed me, he should then take his turn. We went after the last evening lesson to the ground appointed, but met no one. At night B—— sent me a note (we were all in the same boarding-house) to the effect that on reflection he withdrew the challenge of fighting both together, but that he would fight us one after the other after dinner the next day. My answer informed him that such had been my intention, and that we would give him the meeting in the field proposed. The next day, after I saw him with his second quit the dinner-table, I rose, and, nudging Jeston, who stuck to his mutton, followed with my second to Caldecot's Close. We took our ground; I was perfectly collected, and did not fear my adversary. Without the least injury to myself, in five rounds he was sufficiently beaten to give in, and the event made a roar among the boys at calling-over, when reported amongst them. It was an attempt to bully which met a proper check.

The year 1807 saw a change, in the appointment of Dr. Wooll, from Midhurst, to the headmastership. Dr. Inglis had not been popular, and the numbers, which had sunk considerably under his later years, received a very considerable accession soon after Wooll's inauguration. I was among the

few who regretted the departure of Inglis, and it is only justice to his memory to remark that the preparation for a lesson to be said to him tasked the diligence and ability of his scholars. Dr. Wooll was too indulgent, and with such impunity could we trifle with our work, that I have taken up my Sophocles with the leaves uncut. Seeing me cut the leaves in school, he called me up, and dismissed me with a reprimand. There was no longer the same pressure on my industry to which I had been accustomed under Inglis, and in time I became so sensible of my retrogression, that I set myself to work on half-holidays or in the evenings to make translations of Homer and Virgil with such notes and parallel passages as my boyish brain could furnish. Occasionally I would smother my fire with ashes under the grate, "ignes suppositos cineri doloso," to deceive the servant as he went his nightly round at ten o'clock, get into bed with my clothes on, and when the house was all asleep would get up, having hung up cloths to prevent the light being seen in my window, and with strong tea, which I made in my room, sit up to a late hour working at my Homer or 'Georgics.'

Dr. Wooll was a very agreeable, good-natured, amiable, pompous little man. I think of him with great regard; he was very kind to me, and greatly liked by the boys of gentlemanly character. But he was not a scholar, and the preference given to him by the Trustees in his competition with Dr. Butler, Master of Shrewsbury School, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, spoke little for their judgment. Dr. Wooll varied our compositions by introducing English verses once every month; he gave prizes for compositions in Latin and English verse once a year, and to test the elocutionary powers of the fifth and sixth forms, gave also prizes for speaking. The latter were inconsiderable, but the novelty gave interest to them. One was allotted to me for the first scene of Hotspur in the first act of Shakespeare's 'King Henry IV.,' and I was selected out of my place to speak at the June meeting in addition to the twelve first boys. He gave me the closet scene in 'Hamlet,' with Skeeles as the Queen, and an imaginary ghost. I remonstrated with him upon the extreme difficulty of such a scene, and he silenced me by saying, "If I had not intended you to do something extraordinary, I should not have taken you out of your place." Robinson,

Master of the Temple, Lord Hatherton (*né* Walhouse), and the late Sir G. Ricketts were the best speakers.*

They were prominent in the plays, which we got up in a much more expensive style than in Dr. Inglis's time, and with great completeness. The Doctor chose to ignore our proceedings, and we even obtained permission to act them to audiences invited from the town and neighbourhood. Our first play was the 'Castle Spectre,' Robinson acting Earl Osmond, Walhouse Hassan, Ricketts Earl Percy, Dickens (not the great novelist) Angela, and myself Motley and Earl Reginald. My father furnished us with dresses; and the scenery, provided by subscriptions among ourselves, was very creditable to the artist powers of Walhouse and Ricketts, with assistants. Our play the next year, when Robinson and Ricketts had left for the Universities, was Dr. Young's 'Revenge,' with the farce of 'Two Strings to your Bow.' This was acted in the Doctor's School; as usual, first to the boys on the afternoon of a half-holiday, and a second time at night to a large invited assembly, among whom the masters took their places. Wal-

* The following is a copy of one of the cards, held by an old gentleman present at the meeting, with his critical notices of the speakers:

RUGBY SCHOOL.

THE SECOND TUESDAY IN JUNE,

1808.

Latin Prize Poem	"Shakspearus"	Robinson Major (his own composition). *Excellent.*
English Prize Poem	"Panthea and Abradates"	Ricketts Major (his own composition). *Very pretty, and extremely well spoken.*

Rank in School.		SPEECHES.	
11.	Mr. Finch . . .	Micipsa	Sallust. *Lá-Lá.*
12.	„ Hopkins . .	Adam to the Archangel	Milton. *Lá-Lá.*
9.	„ Burdon . . .	Electra.	Sophocles. *Bad.*
6.	„ Crawford . .	Chorus in 'Caractacus'	Mason. *Horrible.*
4.	„ Turner, Ma. .	Leonidas	Glover. *Tolerable.*
8.	„ Butcher . . .	Scipio	Livy.
10.	„ Walhouse . .	Lord Cromartie . . .	State Trials. *Pretty well.*
2.	„ Sulton, Ma. .	Æneas }	Virgil. *Capital.*
7.	„ Wratislaw . .	Dido }	
3.	„ Skeeles . . .	Queen	Shakespeare.
14.	„ M'Cready, Ma.	Hamlet	*Surprisingly well indeed.*
5.	„ Ricketts, Ma. .	Œdipus	Sophocles. *Very well.*
1.	„ Robinson, Ma.	Alexander's Feast . .	Dryden. *Very excellent indeed.*

house was the Alonzo and Ferdinand; my parts were Zanga and Lazarillo. The success was great; we were all much applauded, and I remember the remark of a Mr. Caldecot, reported to me, "I should be uneasy if I saw a son of mine play so well." I had, however, no thought of this but as an amusement, and my pride would have been wounded if a suspicion had been hinted that I could regard it in any other light. The half-year closed with speeches before an auditory consisting only of the school and the gentry of the town. My place was the last among the speakers, and I can now remember the inward elation I felt in marking, as I slowly rose up, the deep and instant hush that went through the whole assembly; I recollect the conscious pride I felt, as the creaking of my shoes came audibly to my ears whilst I deliberately advanced to my place in the centre of the school. My speech was the oration of Titus Quintius, translated from Livy. It was a little triumph in its way, but the last I was doomed to obtain in dear old Rugby.

It was on my return home for one of my Christmas holidays that in passing through Birmingham I found the manager of the theatre there (which my father had relinquished on entering on his Manchester speculation) had sent tickets for a box. Conceiving it proper that the civility should be acknowledged by the appearance of some of our family, I went with one of my sisters and a friend. "Richer, the Funambulist!" was the large-lettered attraction of the play-bills. The play was 'The Busy-body,' very badly acted, and the after-piece a serious pantomime on the ballad of 'Alonzo and Imogene.' Richer represented the Baron "all covered with jewels and gold," and a female porpoise, rejoicing in the name of Watson, being the manager's wife, ungainly and tawdry, was the caricature of the "fair Imogene." As if in studied contrast to this enormous "hill of flesh," a little mean-looking man, in a shabby green satin dress (I remember him well), appeared as the hero, Alonzo the Brave. It was so ridiculous that the only impression I carried away was that the hero and heroine were the worst in the piece. How little did I know, or could guess, that under that shabby green satin dress was hidden one of the most extraordinary theatrical geniuses that have ever illustrated the dramatic poetry of

England! When, some years afterwards, public enthusiasm was excited to the highest pitch by the appearance at Drury Lane of an actor of the name of Kean, my astonishment may easily be conceived on discovering that the little insignificant Alonzo the Brave was the grandly impassioned personator of Othello, Richard, and Shylock!

CHAPTER II.

1808–1811.—Father's pecuniary difficulties—Removal from Rugby—Father's theatrical tastes—Holman, Henderson, and Kemble in 'Hamlet'—Anecdotes of Macklin—Letter from William Birch—Visit to London—O.P. riots—Actors of the day—Earliest gas in London—Father a prisoner for debt—Undertake charge of his company—Journey from Chester to Newcastle—Theatrical season at Newcastle—Country theatres—Father lessee of theatre at Birmingham—*Début* at Birmingham in Romeo (7th June, 1810)—Lothair in 'Adelgitha'—Norval—'Zanga'—'George Barnwell'—Practice on the stage of the empty theatre—Portrait as Romeo by Dewilde—Catalani at the Opera House—Engagement at Newcastle—Achmet in 'Barbarossa'—Osmond in 'The Castle Spectre'—Rolla—Holiday at Tynemouth, practice on the seashore—Capture of a fish—Performance at Leicester and Birmingham—Albyn in 'The Countess of Salisbury,' Luke in 'Riches'—Hardyknute in 'The Wood Demon'—Coach travelling of the period—An escape from danger—Death of grandfather.

In penning this record the continual recurrence of the "first person" grates against my taste and inclination, but an autobiography cannot dispense with *I*'s.

My views had been to strive for one of the exhibitions to help me forward at Oxford, where a degree would have accelerated the period of being called to the Bar. But it was otherwise decreed. My father, who had accumulated a little property in the Funds by his successful management of the Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, and other theatres, outbid his competitors for the lease of the new Manchester Theatre, recently built, the expense attending which, its painting, furniture, and complete fitting up, swallowed the whole of his investment. A partner who could not fulfil the conditions of his contract added to his embarrassment, and a disastrous season left him minus to a very considerable amount. On my return home for the holidays of the winter, 1808–9, I was not

apprised of the difficulties under which my father was labouring. He was a man of a very sanguine temperament, and clung to hope till affairs became desperate. This was made known to me in a very painful way. I had given offence—I cannot remember in what way, but I recollect that I did not conceive myself to blame. Chiefly owing to the interposition of the lady then staying in our house, my father inflicted a severe punishment upon me, which I conceived unmerited, and I took the truant boy's resolution to leave my home. Through my sisters this became known to the lady alluded to, and she took occasion to talk to me—to remonstrate with me, informing me of the desperate state of my father's affairs, and of his inability to pay my bills at Rugby for the last half-year. I was determined not to go back to Rugby under such circumstances. What then was to be done? Would not my going on the stage relieve my father from the further expense of my education? My expectations did not go beyond this result. The extravagant views however of my counsellor looked to another Young Roscius *furore* (I being not yet sixteen years of age), and speculated on a rapid fortune! I had neither the vanity nor the folly to entertain for one instant such ideas; but if I could lighten the load then pressing on my father by foregoing the cost of my education, and could aid him by my co-operation, that I was willing and ready to do. She advised me to go at once to my father, then at the theatre, about a mile distant, make my peace with him, and propose this alternative to him. I fancy she had prepared him for it, in signifying her intention to speak to me on the subject.

I found him in his private room in the theatre, and expressing my regret for having offended him, stated my wish, as my bills at Rugby could not be paid, to take up the stage as a profession. He made a slight demur to the proposal, intimating that Mr. Birch would arrange for the non-payment of the bills—that it had been the wish of his life to see me at the Bar, but that if it was my real wish to go upon the stage, it would be useless for him to oppose it. I gave him to understand that my mind was made up, and the die was cast. I was not then aware of the distance between the two starting-points of life. My father was impressive in his convictions that the stage was a gentlemanly profession. My experience has taught me that whilst the law, the church, the army, and navy give a man the rank

of a gentleman, on the stage that designation must be obtained in society (though the law and the Court decline to recognise it) by the individual bearing. In other callings the profession confers dignity on the initiated, on the stage the player must contribute respect to the exercise of his art. This truth, experienced too late, has given occasion to many moments of depression, many angry swellings of the heart, many painful convictions of the uncertainty of my position. I was not aware, in taking it, that this step in life was a descent from that equality in which I had felt myself to stand with those of family and fortune whom our education had made my companions. I had to live to learn that an ignorant officer could refuse the satisfaction of a gentleman on the ground that his appellant was a player, and that, whilst any of those above-named vocations, whatever the private character, might be received at Court, the privilege of appearing in the sacred precincts was too exclusive for any, however distinguished, on the stage. In giving once a very liberal subscription to a charity, Macklin was asked what name was to be placed before it. "Why," he replied, "according to law I believe it should be 'Charles Macklin, vagabond,' but you may enter it, by courtesy, 'C. Macklin, Esq.'" Molière and Shakespeare, as stage-players, would have come within the English law's category of "vagabonds!"

But at the early age of sixteen my lot was decided, and henceforward my resolve was taken to do the best I could with the means presented to me. My kind friend Birch undertook to pay the Rugby bills, exceeding £100. My brother Edward, younger than myself by five years, continued his studies at a day-school at Manchester, whilst I, making myself as useful as I could to my father in his struggle through the remainder of his theatrical season, divided the time at my disposal between occasional snatches of work at my old classic authors, taking lessons in fencing, and getting by heart the words of such youthful characters in the drama as would seem most likely to suit my age and powers. I have had reason to question the judgment of my father in much that he would recommend and insist upon in my preparation for the stage. With a certain amount of cleverness, his notions and tastes were what I may call too "stagey" to arouse or nurse the originality of a first-rate

actor. He referred always to what he had seen, and cited the manner in which past celebrities would deliver particular passages. Among dramatic poets his preference ran rather to Otway, Rowe, &c., than to Shakespeare, and in after life I had in consequence the difficult task of unlearning much that was impressed on me in my boyish days. Among players his models of excellence in their particular walks were Macklin and Henderson, the theatrical Titans to whose remote grandeur he looked back with confident veneration. He held in high esteem Kemble, and even Pope and Holman, with whom he was contemporary; but Macklin and Henderson, who had been the admiration of his early youth, held the foremost rank in his estimation. He had acted the part of Horatio in the Dublin Theatre three times in one week with three different Hamlets—Holman, Kemble, and Henderson—and with all the personal advantages of the two former, he regarded Henderson as immeasurably their superior. A criticism in one of the papers of the day distinguished the three: Holman as Hamlet; Kemble, Prince Hamlet; and Henderson, Hamlet Prince of Denmark. His career was short, but from the testimony of those who witnessed his performances, he must have been a worthy successor of Garrick, and indisputably pre-eminent in the characters of Hamlet, Iago, Falstaff, Shylock, Benedict, &c.

Macklin, whose personation of Shylock to its true reading had elicited the impromptu of Pope, "This is the Jew that Shakespeare drew," was my father's theatrical oracle. His portrait hung over the fireplace of our little dining-room with the inscription, "Charles Macklin, aged 98." In some of his visits to Dublin he had instructed my father in the part of Egerton in his comedy of the 'Man of the World;' and on the occasion of his last benefit there he sent for his pupil from Waterford (where my father was playing) to act Egerton.

It was said of him that at nineteen he could not read. It is however certain that he was servant, similar to what at Oxford is called a "scout," at Trinity College, Dublin. The custom was for these servants to wait in the courts of the college in attendance on the calls of the students. To every shout of "Boy!" the scout, first in turn, replied, "What number?" and on its announcement went up to the room denoted, for his

orders. After Macklin by his persevering industry had gained a name as author and actor in one of his engagements at the Dublin Theatre, some unruly young men caused a disturbance, when Macklin in very proper terms rebuked them for their indecent behaviour. The audience applauded, but one of the rioters, thinking to put him down by reference to his early low condition, with contemptuous bitterness shouted out "Boy!" Poor Macklin for a moment lost his presence of mind, but recollecting himself, modestly stepped forward, and with manly complacency responded, "What number?" It is unnecessary to add that the plaudits of the house fully avenged him on the brutality of his insulters.

His manner was generally harsh, as indeed was his countenance. So much so that on some one speaking to Quin of the "strong lines" of Macklin's face, he cut short his remarks with, "The lines of his face, sir? You mean the cordage." My father has described to me his mode of speaking to the players at rehearsal. There was good advice, though conveyed in his gruff voice and imperious tone. "Look at me, sir, look at me! Keep your eye fixed on me when I am speaking to you! Attention is always fixed; if you take your eye from me you rob the audience of my effects, and you rob me of their applause!"—a precept I never forgot, and to which I have been much indebted.

After he had left the stage, which the utter loss of memory compelled him to do, my father paid him a visit in London, and his account of it gave curious evidence of an inveterate prejudice surviving the decay of physical and intellectual power. The old man, with lack-lustre eye, was sitting in his arm-chair unconscious of any one being present, till Mrs. Macklin addressed him. "My dear, here is Mr. Macready come to see you." "Who?" said Macklin. "Mr. Macready, my dear." "Ha! who is he?" "Mr. Macready, you know, who went to Dublin to act for your benefit." "Ha! my benefit? what was it? what did he act?" "I acted Egerton, sir," said my father, "in your own play." "Ha! my play? what was it?" "'The Man of the World,' sir." "Ha, 'Man of the World!' Devilish good title! Who wrote it?" "You did, sir." "Did I? Well! What was it about?" "Why, sir, there was a Scotchman"—— "Ah d——n them!" My father finding it

useless to prolong this last interview with his old preceptor, took his leave.

The weeks between Christmas and Midsummer dragged their slow length along, and a miserable period it was. My poor father, in frequent apprehension of arrest, was from time to time obliged to absent himself and to study modes of concealment whilst taking measures (at that time necessary, from the state of the law) to make himself a dealer in goods, in order to pass through the Court of Bankruptcy. By the kind aid of friends he was enabled eventually to accomplish this; in the meanwhile his release from the Manchester Theatre was obtained by the sacrifice of all the valuable property he had placed in it, and an additional £1000 paid by his securities, my grandfather and uncle.

Before the close of the theatre Mr. John Fawcett, an excellent comic actor, a man very much respected, and an old friend of my father, came down to fufil engagements with him at the Manchester and Newcastle Theatres. During his performances at Manchester he was our guest, and in discoursing on the subject of my adoption of the player's profession, he most kindly urged the advisability of my seeing the first actors of the day, of my learning to fence from the best masters; and very kindly gave me an invitation to spend some weeks at his house in London for this purpose. At the close of his Manchester engagement I travelled with him to Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he acted during the race-week, and where I was commissioned by my father to overlook the course of affairs during a short summer season, in fact to be the deputed manager. It was here I received the following letter from my relative and friend, William Birch:

"To W. C. MACREADY, ESQ., Newcastle-on-Tyne.

"DEAR SIR, Rugby, August 6th, 1809.

"Having seen in the papers your father's address to the Manchester audience on his relinquishing that theatre, I cannot refrain from writing to express my sincere concern, and to add that any act of friendship as far as lies in my power shall gladly be executed. In the first place, I beg you to accept this letter as a receipt in full for my demands upon you, and for all the bills* which I sent in on yours and your brother's account; and I am glad it is

* Considerably above £100.

at all in my power to relieve Mr. Macready from that burden. I wish also to know whether I or any of my brothers could be of service to your younger brother in any mode, or to your sisters. Whatever your father may point out I will endeavour to the utmost of my power to accomplish. Your friend Jeston called here last week, and surprised me with the account of your being manager of a theatre, for which your age seemed not yet sufficient; but your desire to assist your father, which I find from Jeston was the reason of your adopting your present profession, gives you power, which I ardently hope will bring you the rewards of success, and I esteem your character highly for exerting yourself in one of the first of all virtues, filial affection. I beg you will communicate to your father, with my kindest regards, my wish to be in some degree serviceable to him and to his family, and if I knew where to direct to him, I would address him; and shall be most happy to hear from him, explaining his views with respect to you and the rest of the family. My wife unites with me in sincere regards. William has sailed again to India. Mary is tolerably well.

"Believe me, dear Sir,
"Yours very truly,
"WM. BIRCH."

I remained here about two months, not deriving much advantage, though some experience, from the society of some of the players, and falling desperately in love with one of the actresses —no improbable consequence of the unguarded situation of a boy of sixteen. The theatre being closed, I went on a most tearful journey ("I had left my dear Phillis behind") to meet, after the sale of our house-furniture, my father at Birmingham, where the greatest sympathy was shown with his misfortunes. The manager of the theatre there took advantage of the public feeling, and made an engagement with him for a few nights' performances, which were extremely well attended; but the night of his benefit was one that returned a receipt never before known there. Not only was every place occupied, but very many sent presents, and from one club a purse was made by every member paying a guinea for his ticket. This happy circumstance placing him in present funds, he left Birmingham, accompanied by me, on his route to Leicester. Here we parted for a time, he remaining to conduct the affairs of the theatre, and I taking the coach to London to pay my visit to my father's friend, Mr. Fawcett. My reception was most friendly, though the recollection has not escaped me of the awkwardness and loneliness I felt for the first time among strangers, who in their frank hospitality soon ceased to be so.

I reached London, September 1809, the day after the opening

of the New Covent Garden Theatre, which, to the wonder of the time, had been built in a year from the date of the destruction of the old one. My father's command that, from the danger of becoming an imitator, I should not see John Kemble act, proved unnecessary; for the O.P. riots, which nightly drowned the voices of the players, prevented his and Mrs. Siddons' appearance. A little disturbance had been anticipated on account of the prices being raised from six shillings to seven shillings in the boxes, and from three shillings to four shillings in the pit; but the proprietors of the theatre too confidently relied on the beauty and splendour of the edifice reconciling the public to the advance. The spirit of resistance was, however, persevering and indomitable. After three or four weeks the tumult became so far lulled that the three first acts of each performance were listened to by the scanty audiences that attended; but at half-price the well organised opposition rushing in, began the O.P. dance on the benches of the pit, and not one syllable more was to be heard. The scenes presented by the acting audience, and the "hubbub wild" that deafened the ear, baffle description. Some of the leading pugilists of the day were franked into the boxes, to champion the cause of the proprietors where the *mêlée* might be thickest. Horns, cat-calls, and all imaginable discordant sounds were mingled in the vast uproar. I was a frequent visitor, my name being put upon the free-list, and had the satisfaction of seeing Cooke, Young, C. Kemble, Murden, Fawcett, Emery, Liston, and other first-rate performers, for three acts each night, but soon grew tired of the eternal din, that became one same barbarian yell. This continued for some months, until the menaced ruin of the establishment induced the proprietors to come to an agreement with the self-installed representatives of the public, and a pacification was ratified on terms of mutual concession. Seven shillings for the boxes were conceded by the insurgents, and three-and-sixpence was yielded to them as the price of admission to the pit. The Drury Lane Company meanwhile, who had been burned out of their theatre, profited largely by this interruption of the Covent Garden performances, having opened the Lyceum, which was nightly filled by those who wished to see plays acted. I was a frequent auditor, my business being to see as much good acting as I could. Elliston had taken the

Surrey Theatre, where the law allowed him to perform only burlettas, and here I saw him act Macbeth as a pantomime, and Captain Macheath in 'The Beggars' Opera,' the words of Gay thrown into jingling rhyme. Every morning before breakfast my walk was from Thornhaugh Street to the Albany to take lessons in fencing from Angelo; and I certainly was industrious in my endeavour to acquire grace and skill in the use of the small-sword. I became acquainted with Morton, Reynolds, Theodore Hook, and Vernon, since known for the gift of his splendid gallery of pictures to the nation. Tom Sheridan I also met in the park, and recollect his handsome, sickly face and lively, good-humoured manner. My evenings were given regularly to some theatre, and my early mornings as regularly to Angelo. The 25th of October was the fiftieth anniversary of George III.'s accession, and a popular demonstration was got up for the Jubilee, as it was termed, with illuminations, to divert, it was said, the public attention from the embarrassed state of political affairs. On that occasion there was a gas star before one of the houses in Pall Mall, which relighted itself as the wind every now and then partially blew out some of its jets. This was, I think, the first public experiment of gas; and it was a very general opinion that it never could be rendered serviceable. How frequently have the predictions of prejudice and ignorance been falsified by science!

My visit, from which I derived considerable benefit, being ended, I returned to Leicester, and thence proceeded to Manchester, where by appointment I rejoined my father. We slept at the 'Bridgewater Arms' that night, and the next day late in the afternoon I went with him to the house of the sheriff's officer, to whom he was to surrender himself. When I found him actually a prisoner, my fortitude gave way, and I burst into tears. He had evidently a struggle to collect himself, but he did so, saying, "There is nothing I cannot bear but compassion. If you cannot command yourself, go away." I remained with him whilst it was permitted, and the next morning he went with the officer to his sad prison, Lancaster Castle, and I with no less heavy a heart to take charge of the company of players still in his service at Chester. I was but sixteen years old, and "the world was all before me." My lodgings were not uncomfortable, but my situation was very dreary.

I was quite alone, and every performer in the theatre, of which I now entered on the direction, was a stranger to me; and what aggravated the difficulty of my undertaking, several were in a state of mutiny, their salaries being considerably in arrear. The slovenly manner in which the business of the theatre was carried on by the persons in office was apparent to me in the play I saw represented the night of my arrival. I was surprised and vexed to find that it was a novelty of some interest put forward without notice or due preparation—'The Foundling of the Forest,' which had been an attraction through the summer at the Haymarket Theatre. I enforced more attention at the rehearsals; announced a piece upon the subject of the late jubilee, which excited curiosity, and was attractive; received what were called "bespeaks" from Lord Grosvenor and Egerton, the member for the city opposed to him, which were crowded houses; but when I had cleared off most of the claims upon the concern, the proprietors put in an execution for the remainder of rent due, and I was at my wits' end. I wrote to friends for the loan of what money they could afford me, and having conciliated the good-will of some of the best among the actors, I was enabled to discharge the rent, pay off the salaries in arrear, and at the close of the theatre pursue my journey with three of the company in a post-chaise to Newcastle-on-Tyne. The money I had been able to provide was nicely calculated to carry us through. It was the week before Christmas, and regular December weather. My hopes of relief from the obligations which still embarrassed me, and of raising the credit of my father's theatres, rested on the approaching season at Newcastle. My whole dependence was there. The best performers from Chester were to meet there the *élite* of the Leicester troop, and together would form a very good provincial company.

We left Chester, where I had learned my first lesson of the world's difficulties, on Christmas Eve, and, with four in a chaise and luggage, could not expect in winter roads to move on very expeditiously. Travelling all night we reached Brough, a small town on the wild borders of Westmoreland, about noon on Christmas Day, where we stopped to lunch. Here I gave our last £5 Bank of England note to pay the post-boy who had brought us from Sedbergh. To our utter dismay the

landlord entered the room with the note in his hand to inform us he did not like the look of it, that he therefore demurred to give change for it, and that he could not send us forward, from the state of the roads, without four horses! Here was a dead lock! all my cherished hopes endangered, if not ruined, unless I reached Newcastle in good time on the morrow, and how to get there or send nearly 170 miles was a perplexity which in a very distressed state of mind we had to deliberate upon. My position, if I could not reach Newcastle in time, must have been deplorable. We sent for the landlord; he was not within, having gone up to his farm! Time began to press, for it was already evident we could not under any circumstances reach Newcastle that night; but what means of extrication were there? My watch had been left at Chester to eke out the needful amount for this journey. Those of my three *compagnons de voyage* were laid on the table, and the landlord, who had returned, was once more summoned. I gave him what references of respectability I could, and, finding him immovable in his refusal to send us on without four horses, we submitted to this extra charge on condition he would advance three pounds upon the watches and give change for the five-pound note. After some hesitation he yielded; the post-boy was paid, the four horses were put to, and the postillions charged to instruct the innkeeper at the next stage to forward us with a pair. The crew with a flowing sheet sailing "Away from the Bay of Biscay, O," could scarcely have felt greater relief, than we did in finding ourselves in full gallop from what had threatened to be our prison in Brough. We gave three cheers as we cleared the dreary little town, and on reaching Durham late in the evening found our funds just equal to the payment of the chaise that landed us there. Being well known here, there was no stint to the enjoyment of a good supper and good beds, the bill for which I took with me to Newcastle betimes the next morning, obtaining cash from the treasurer of the theatre to remit the full discharge of all to our obliging host of the Wheatsheaf.

The event of the season at Newcastle did not disappoint me. The company was very superior to the average of provincial theatres. Poor Conway, then a very handsome young man, with a good voice, great ardour in the study of his art, and evincing very considerable promise, was its hero, perform-

ing Hamlet, Othello, Jaffier, &c., to good houses. The new play of 'The Foundling of the Forest,' got up with new scenery, &c., under my most careful superintendence, was an attraction for many nights. 'The Jubilee,' 'Macbeth' as a pantomime (*proh pudor!*), 'Valentine and Orson,' &c., added to our receipts, enabling me to remit regularly three pounds each week to my father in his melancholy duress at Lancaster. A little before the close of the season in the spring he obtained with his release his certificate of bankruptcy, with most complimentary testifications to his uprightness and liberality.

It was at Birmingham that the commission of his bankruptcy was taken out, and at one of the meetings, on the question being put of what should be done with his plate (among which was a handsome vase presented to him for his aid to the Birmingham General Hospital), George Freer, a principal creditor, stood up and said, "If they took Macready's plate, he should instantly propose a subscription for a new service to him;" on which it was unanimously voted that his plate and other personal properties should be returned to him.

In the early part of the season a person imposed on me, by the name of "Harrison," the belief that he was the great concert singer of that day, and I very gladly engaged him to sing a certain number of songs on a particular evening. His name was posted in the formidable large letters of the playbills, and there was an attendance eager to see and hear the famous tenor of the Ancient Concerts; but, in proportion to my satisfaction at the appearance of the audience, was my horror and dismay at seeing the fellow go on the stage in a pair of white duck trousers (it was winter), a chapeau-bras under his arm, and with an unsteadiness of deportment that showed he had been sacrificing much more liberally to Bacchus than to Apollo. Before he had got through his first song the hissing began, and a chorus of hootings responded to his unsteady attempts to bow himself off. I sent on the stage-manager to state the fraud that had been practised on me, and to make the tender to the dissatisfied of the return of their admission-money. Few took advantage of it; therefore the next morning, having reduced the receipt of the night to that of the lowest average of the season, I sent the surplus with a note to the General Hospital, declining on the part of

the management to profit by the imposition. On another occasion I was threatened with a challenge for having, in my capacity as manager, forcibly removed a young man from the boxes who, in a state of intoxication, was disturbing the audience.

Omnia mutantur is a familiar proverb of the oldest philosophy. In this world of changes the theatrical calling has undergone revolutions as complete as those of science or religion. Witness the difference between the present state of the stage and its condition when I entered on it. At that time a theatre was considered indispensable in towns of very scanty populations. The prices of admission varied from 5*s.*, 4*s.*, or 3*s.* to boxes; 2*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* to pit; and 1*s.* to gallery. A sufficient number of theatres were united in what was called a circuit, to occupy a company during the whole year, so that a respectable player could calculate upon his weekly salary, without default, from year's end to year's end: and the circuits, such as those of Norwich, York, Bath and Bristol, Exeter, Salisbury, Kent, Manchester, Birmingham, &c., with incomes rising from £70 to £300 per annum, would be a sort of home to him, so long as his conduct and industry maintained his favour with his audiences. But beyond that, the regularity of rehearsal and the attention paid to the production of plays, most of which came under the class of the "regular drama," made a sort of school for him in the repetition of his characters and the criticism of his auditors, from his proficiency in which he looked to Covent Garden or Drury Lane as the goal of his exertions. For instance, from Exeter came Kean; from Dublin Miss O'Neill, Conway, R. Jones, Lewis, W. Farren; from York Fawcett, C. Mathews, Emery, Harley, J. Kemble. The distance from London was then so great, and the expense and fatigue of travelling was such as to make a journey then more rare; and the larger towns, as York, Newcastle, Bath, Exeter, Norwich, were centres or capitals of provincial circles, to which the county families resorted for the winter season, or crowded to the public weeks of races and assizes, when the assembly-rooms and the theatres were the places of fashionable meeting.

My experience of country theatres never presented me with any scenes resembling the barn of Hogarth's Strolling Players, but it was not altogether without its whimsical expedients

and ludicrous mishaps. On the first representation of the grand Ballet of Action of Macbeth I was most busily and anxiously engaged in looking after the working of the machinery, which was very complicated, and urging on the performers. In the scene after Duncan's murder there was scarcely three minutes' time for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to wash the blood from their hands. Macbeth, poor Conway, on rushing from the stage in an agony of despair exclaimed, "Oh! my dear sir, my dresser is not here! What shall I do?" (The old man with water, soap, and towel was at the opposite side.) There was not an instant for reflection. "Here," I cried, "come here:" dragging him up to the gentlemen's first dressing-room, where he plunged his hands into a jug of water. "There is no towel, my dear sir!" in continued agony he cried. I snatched up the first semblance of cloth that lay to hand, with which he dried his half-washed hands, and dashed back to the stage again. With the water and cloth in my hands I met at the foot of the stairs Lady Macbeth in equal perplexity, who, hastily availing herself of the ready aid, rushed back to her place on the stage. The jug, &c., I hastily deposited in my own room, and returned to watch the closing of the scene. The curtain fell that night with much applause on our barbarous violation of Shakespeare, and I went to my lodgings through a deep snow, insensible to the cold from the satisfaction I felt in the success of the evening. The next morning the acting manager met me with a very grave countenance, foretelling "the nature of a tragic volume," and opened his tale of woe with—"Sir, I am very sorry to tell you, there are thieves in the theatre!" "Good heavens!" I answered, "is it possible? Let every inquiry be made, that they may be punished, or at least turned out of the place. What has been stolen?" "Why, sir, Mr. Simkin's breeches! When he went to dress himself at the end of the evening, his breeches were gone, and he was obliged to walk home to his lodgings through the snow without any." I desired the strictest search and inquiry to be made, and no pains spared to detect the offender. After a little time, however, a thought crossed me, and I asked the manager what kind of small clothes they were. When he told me they were brown kerseymere, it flashed across me that I had seized them for Conway's

towel, and had thrown them under the table in my own room. The injury was repaired, but the story of Simkin's small clothes was for some time repeated as against my impetuosity.

With my father's return my responsibilities ceased; and it was no light load from which my inexperience, not always able to avoid mistakes, was relieved. I, however, still attended the rehearsals, and in the "getting up" of the melodramas, pantomimes, &c., I was the instructor of the performers. One morning I remember, when my father was present, showing one of them, who had to personate a savage, how, in making a sort of tiger-spring upon his enemy, suddenly to lapse into astonishment on seeing his own figure reflected in the polished surface of his antagonist's shield. My father was taken by surprise, and involuntarily said (for he was not very prodigal of his praise), "If you can do anything like that on the stage, there will be few come near you."

The season was closed, and arrangements made, not without difficulty, by my father for our journey to Birmingham, and for opening the theatre there, of which he had become lessee. The peculiar situation in which I had been placed for the greater part of a year was one, as I now look back upon it, that might have determined my lot for more severe trials than have, I say it thankfully, fallen to my share. It almost unavoidably threw me into intimacy with minds not capable of improving, nor likely much to benefit, one so young and impulsive as myself; and led me into occasional dissipation, which might have induced habits destructive of ability and reputation. To my excellent friends the Misses Hedley, three maiden sisters of good family, and almost oracles in the best social circles of Newcastle, I owe my rescue from the liabilities I was then incurring. They were lovers of the theatre; one particular box was nightly reserved for them, which they scarcely ever failed to occupy for some part of the evening. A little before the close of the season they gave me an invitation to take tea with them, and took advantage of the occasion to represent to me that some of the leading people in the place would be ready to show me kindness and attention if they were sure that I was select in my associates. They pointed out to me the evils and dangers of dissipation and low

company in the career I was about to enter on, and induced me by their friendly and sensible expostulations to give attentive consideration to a subject of such consequence to young people entering life. That they became the firm and cordial friends of myself and my sisters to the end of their lives is the proof that their thoughtful interposition between me and ill fortune was not without some result. Happy is the destiny that gives to a youth of unbounded spirits and uncontrollable excitability, like myself, the blessing of early monitors, whether in the more painful discipline of consequent suffering or in the more indulgent agency of pre-admonition such as theirs. The vocation of player, as well as that of teacher, is often undertaken for no other reason than that nothing else offers to the unoccupied and needy. Too often is it made for the idle and ignorant a refuge from the duties of painstaking industry; and, in daily intercourse with men and women so actuated and circumstanced, it is not to be wondered at if youth should soon lose its freshness and the lofty tone of thought with which it was prepared to enter on its career.

We reached Birmingham with so reduced a purse that my father had to call upon a friend for a loan to meet our immediate expenses. But the theatre opened; the company, which was still further reinforced, was pronounced very good, and all went on satisfactorily. Conway was the great favourite. My father, to whom I of course deferred, had selected Romeo for the character of my *début*, and accordingly I was now in earnest work upon it. Frequently in the course of my solitary attempts the exclamation would escape me, "I cannot do it;" and in some of my private rehearsals I had the discouraging remark of my father, "That will not do," to damp my courage and cast the gloomy shade of doubt on my exertions. Still, however, I persevered; and as the time of making the desperate plunge approached, my hopes were somewhat cheered by the encouragement of the lady who was rehearsing her part of Juliet with me (Mrs. Young, from Drury Lane Theatre) and my father's admission of "Very great improvement." By dint of practice and repeated rehearsals, alone and with the other performers, I had got by rote, as it were, every particular of place, gesture, feeling, and intonation—and well for me I had done so; for if it made my heart beat more quickly to read

in the street playbills* the announcement of "The part of Romeo by a young gentleman, his first appearance on any stage," the emotions I experienced on first crossing the stage, and coming forward in face of the lights and the applauding audience, were almost overpowering. There was a mist before my eyes. I seemed to see nothing of the dazzling scene before me, and for some time I was like an automaton moving in certain defined limits. I went mechanically through the variations in which I had drilled myself, and it was not until the plaudits of the audience awoke me from the kind of waking dream in which I seemed to be moving, that I gained my self-possession, and really entered into the spirit of the character and, I may say, felt the passion, I was to represent. Every round of applause acted like inspiration on me: I "trod on air," became another being, or a happier self; and when the curtain fell at the conclusion of the play, and the intimate friends and performers crowded on the stage to raise up the Juliet and myself, shaking my hands with fervent congratulations, a lady asked me, "Well, sir, how do you feel now?" my boyish answer was without disguise, "I feel as if I should like to act it all over again."

After the repetitions of 'Romeo and Juliet,' the play of 'Adelgitha,' one of Mat Lewis's forgotten tragedies, was brought forward, in which Conway took the part of Robert Guiscard, and the youth Lothair was cast to me, now advertised as Mr. William Macready. The character is placed in very effective situations, and, abounding in clap-traps, strengthened the impression of my first appearance. My next character was Norval, in Home's tragedy of 'Douglas.' Conway was Glenalvon; he was a great favourite, and, as the leading actor of a country theatre, deservedly so. But unfortunately the tendency of his study was by isolated and startling effects to surprise an audience into applause. The consistency and harmony of character was not the aim of his research. To

* The playbill stated: On Thursday evening, June 7, will be presented the tragedy of 'Romeo and Juliet' (written by Shakspear). The part of Romeo by a YOUNG GENTLEMAN, being his first appearance on any stage. Friar Laurence Mr. Harley, and Juliet by Mrs. Young. The play was followed by the farce of 'The Irishman in London' (written by the father), in which the elder Macready performed the part of Murtoch Delany.—ED.

"make points" was the end of his practice and study, to which the spectators would respond, as I now perceive, too liberally. I remember well thinking that I had no chance against him, with his beauty of person, commanding stature, and physical power; but the sequel proved, unhappily for him, how much my inexperienced judgment was at fault. Upon the strength of my school performance I was next announced for Zanga in Dr. Young's 'Revenge,' which, although regarded with wonder as a school-boy's effort, proved on the stage a very feeble and ineffective piece of declamation. In 'George Barnwell' I was quite at home, and acted the bashful, guilty youth with a consciousness of being at least near the truth in the unaffected simplicity of the early scenes, and the passionate remorse that follows them.

These plays, with their repetitions, made up the term of my Birmingham season. I was launched, and, notwithstanding the success that has attended me, I may truly say "upon a sea of troubles." My father was now sanguine in his expectations of my advancement, but I was not. Still, I resolved to make the best of what might be before me. I worked in earnest on the parts submitted to me after each performance, endeavouring to improve on its repetition. It was only on Sundays that the theatre, being locked up, was free from the presence of all employed in it. I used to get the key, and, after morning service, lock myself in, and pace the stage in every direction to give myself ease, and become familiar in my deportment with exits and entrances, and with every variety of gesture and attitude. My characters were all acted over and over, and speeches recited till, tired out, I was glad to breathe the fresh air again. This was for several years a custom with me.

On the close of my Birmingham performances my father, who attached great importance to the different modes of giving publicity to a name, took me up to London in order to have a portrait of me taken and engraved. Not being a connoisseur in art, he gave the commission to an artist who was known for his theatrical likenesses, but whose drawing and colouring were miserably defective. Poor Dewilde! Many theatrical memories are perpetuated by him in the portrait-gallery belonging to the Garrick Club. I sat, or rather stood,

to him in the dress of Romeo, which my father had peremptorily designed for me; and after making me go through the movements of Romeo's first scene, he decided on a passage; but to suit his idea of the picturesque, made me so alter the attitude, that it had no reference whatever to the expression of the words. The deference which I held towards an artist who was to my ignorance a great authority made me submissive, and a very unmeaning representation of the Veronese lover was in consequence displayed in the print-shop windows.

It was on this visit to London that, from the gallery of the Opera House, I first saw the songstress whose appearance made a sensation in all the capitals of Europe—Catalani; the opera was 'Cosi fan tutte,' and Tramezzani and Naldi were her supporters; but the height at which we were placed incommoded me too much to allow me to derive any pleasure from the performance. After a few weeks' holiday by the seaside, at Parkgate, near Chester, passed with my brother, I was sent to Newcastle; the assizes were then on, and with the repetition of the characters I had acted, except Zanga, I appeared in Achmet in Dr. Brown's tragedy of 'Barbarossa,' Earl Osmond in Mat Lewis's drama of 'The Castle Spectre,' and Rolla in Sheridan's translation of Kotzebue's 'Pizarro.' I was warmly received, and the partiality with which my early essays were encouraged there seemed to increase in fervour to the very last night, when I made my farewell bow to a later generation.

Several weeks after this engagement, as it was termed, were passed in solitude at Tynemouth, then a small village, where, with a very few books, I contrived to while away the lonely hours, fishing, bathing, rambling along the shore, meditating on the characters I had acted, and declaiming to the louder waves the various passages from them. Through my professional course this has been a practice with me whenever opportunity offered. In one of my fishing excursions I was amused and surprised by the sagacity of one of our boatmen. We were at a short distance from the rocky shore, our lines let down to the full depth, when one, pulling up, observed that "it was a good one from its weight." To our surprise it was a very good sized cod-fish, but lean-looking, wasted, and there was a sort of sea-vermin crawling in numbers over its skin.

A fish of that size so near the shore and lying, as it evidently had been, at the bottom, instantly suggested the cause of its enfeebled state to the sailor. "I should not wonder," said the man, "if he has a gold watch in his belly—let's see," and with his knife opening the stomach, he threw down on the bench a cat of middling size, exclaiming, "Dash my buttons, if it isn't a kitting." It would have been supposed impossible for the fish to have passed so large a mass down its throat; but, being lodged in the stomach, the digestive action of the creature must have been stopped, and the animal remained in its perfect state, the hair of its skin only being ruffled. Our unscientific boatman directly knew that indigestion was the malady of the voracious fish.

My next performances were at Leicester, where I was received with great favour, acting over the characters I had previously played. The close of the theatre was marked by a very flattering testimony to my father in a present to him from the proprietors of one hundred guineas, as a mark of their respect. I should not, in justice to his memory, forget to record that he lived to pay off many of the debts of which his certificate of bankruptcy legally acquitted him. He was bent on making the experiment of a winter season at Birmingham, and there we returned for a few weeks before Christmas, where I opened in the part of Achmet. His predilection for the plays of a more recent date forced me upon characters which were uncongenial to me. 'The Countess of Salisbury' was a favourite with him, as having been acted by Barry and Mrs. Barry. Accordingly I had to prepare myself in the part of Albyn, in which I produced but little effect. As a counterpoise to his erroneous judgment in that instance, he was very much impressed by the character of Luke in an alteration of Massinger's 'City Madam' by Sir James Bland Burgess. The play was called 'Riches.' This was given me to prepare, and I found the task extremely difficult. I cannot help regarding the character as an unnatural one. The pure and lofty sentiments so eloquently poured forth in Luke's pleading for his brother's debtors, the conviction uttered to himself of his degradation being the consequence of his own errors, appear in inconsistent contrast with the treatment, so wantonly cruel, of his relatives and his former clients when placed

within his power. The play scarcely conveys a moral in the startling violence of its transitions from penitence to inordinate selfishness and barbarity, and back again to humiliation and contrition. But there are many scenes of great power, affording scope to the actor; and to these the play is indebted for the success it obtained, which in the country was very considerable, although in London it took no permanent hold of public interest.

An incorrect MS. of Mr. Lewis's melodrama called 'The Wood Demon, or the Clock has Struck,' from notes taken in shorthand, I believe, during its performance, was given to my father, who decided on producing it, and wished me to act Hardyknute. I re-wrote much of the character, and with the care bestowed on its rehearsals, and all the earnestness I could infuse into the performance, it excited much interest, and, particularly at Newcastle, proved a great attraction for many nights; but the two parts requiring great exertion on the same night was a trial of my strength. I could, however, then say with Œdipe—"J'étais jeune et superbe."

The main hope of my father in opening the Birmingham Theatre at this unusual period rested on an engagement made with Madame Catalani to sing a certain number of nights. Being a never-failing attraction, it was a deathblow to my father's confident and sanguine expectations to receive, a few days before her intended appearance, a letter from her husband, Mons. Valebreque, with the disastrous statement that her severe illness made it impossible for her to fulfil her engagement. My father, in his distress at such a disappointment, was disposed to doubt the credibility of Valebreque's assertion, and, being unable to leave Birmingham himself, ordered me to get ready without loss of time, and start for London by the Balloon Coach, which would reach town about nine o'clock the next morning; this was considered a fast coach, leaving Birmingham at three in the afternoon. I was ready, but the Balloon was full. The book-keeper, however, informed me that another coach was starting, and would be in London nearly as soon as the Balloon. My business was despatch, for I was to see Catalani in the course of the next day, and return by the mail at night. I therefore readily took advantage of the opportune proposal,

and got into the coach. Its odours were many, various, and unpleasantly mingled, and the passengers, a half-drunken sailor and an old woman, not of the first rank in society, did not impress me with the prospect of a very pleasant journey. The pace at which the vehicle proceeded made me doubt if it would ever reach London, and its creakings and joltings seemed to augur a certain overturn. We did not arrive at Coventry, eighteen miles distant, before eight o'clock—five hours!—nor reach London before five the next evening. To my great distress and disgust I found that I had been put into a coach notorious among all travellers as the L . . . y Liverpool. I proceeded to Catalani's house, found her in bed very ill, and the next day was on my way home.

This winter season was unproductive, but it lives in my memory associated with an event that I recall, though with regret, not wishing to omit any circumstance in my life's career. An old schoolfellow, to whom I had been fag at Rugby, came with his wife, an exceedingly lovely young creature, and took up his abode at the Hen and Chickens Hotel. He had visited my father when at school, and, calling on him and me, introduced his beautiful little bride to us. He was on the most intimate terms with me; they dining with us, and I with them. His strange manner and habits, however, could not escape remark. He rarely rose before two o'clock in the afternoon, rambled at night through all parts of the theatre, indulged very freely in wine, and seemed utterly to neglect his lovely little wife. He asked me to take her out to walk, to accompany her to the theatre when I did not act, and sit with her in our private box—a very secluded one. My father hinted his suspicions to me that all was not right, and I had a monitor in my own breast that made me apprehensive too. I could not, so young, be placed in such constant intimacy with one of my own age, so attractive and betraying occasionally manifest partiality, without the consciousness of danger from the feelings she awakened. I must confess to heaving the lover's sigh when L—— one evening made a sort of "scene" of his disclosure, that Mrs. L—— was not married to him. I remonstrated with him on the wrong he had done my father, who had introduced his mistress to a lady in society, and who would have made her acquainted

ith my sisters if they had been at home. He admitted his ulpability, and blamed himself for having taken her to the amily of another friend of his, a college chum, but that he did not know what he did." He determined to leave Birmingam the next morning, but his fair companion very much ished to see me before their departure. To this my father as opposed, and I was of course obliged to yield to his will; ut the image of her beauty was long present to me, and learned to regard her absence as a happy escape from a very erious danger. Vanity was at the root of all this proceeding. —— was, even at school, a coxcomb, and a great novel-reader; nd acted the rake less from passion, I believe, than from the esire to be talked of. I could not be blind to the fact that in is intended romance he was desirous of disentangling himself om the temporary connection he had formed, and of passing is mistress off on me. My dependent condition favoured ie in this predicament more than I deserved. Many years fter a poor little, lusty, ill-clad, vulgar-looking woman, eemingly about forty-five years of age, knocked at my hambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and asked me to help her i her great distress. She was the wife of a serjeant who ad left her without means. To my astonishment it was the right vision of beauty that had gleamed upon and dazzled ıy sight in years gone by. I gave her all the help I could. 'oor creature!

We received here the news of my grandfather's death. He as a tradesman, and, as the Father of the Commons, highly espected in Dublin, as his funeral, the greatest known there or many years, testified. He left above £20,000, which was lmost entirely squandered in a chancery suit brought by one of the sons, an attorney, but involving the whole family, against the executor, an elder brother. My poor father through his life was wont to turn in emergency to the probability of what "the lawsuit" would give him. It gave his widow, I believe, after upwards of twenty years' litigation, something like £1 15*s*.

CHAPTER III.

1811–1812.—First appearance in 'Hamlet'—Criticism on the part of Hamlet—Visit to London—A dangerous acquaintance—Performing at Leicester and Newcastle—Mrs. Whitlock—New parts—Acting with Mrs. Siddons at Newcastle in 'The Gamester' and 'Douglas'—Her instructions to a young actor—Criticism on her acting—Birmingham—Holman—W. H. West Betty, the *ci-devant* young Roscius—Miss Smith—A lesson in judgment on acting—Acting with Mrs. Jordan at Leicester—Her acting—Revival of 'Richard II.' at Newcastle—Anecdotes of G. F. Cooke.

IN the season which opened at Newcastle immediately after Christmas, the principal attraction was the play of 'Riches,' in which I very much improved my performance of Luke. The public favour attended me in the fresh attempts I made, and the Earl of Essex, Roderick Dhu, in a drama called the 'Knight of Snowdon,' founded on Walter Scott's 'Lady of the Lake,' John of Lorne, in Miss Baillie's play of the 'Family Legend,' and Julian, in a piece called the 'Peasant Boy,' which was exactly suited to my years, and which, from my earnestness and reality, affected the audiences very deeply, all strengthened the partiality of my early patrons. But the task of the season to me was my first appearance in 'Hamlet' for my benefit. As I look back on this venture, which shook my nerves as much as my first passing into the sight of box, pit, and gallery, it appears like presumption in a youth of eighteen to hazard the good opinions already won in such an arduous attempt. The critic who had made a study of this masterpiece of Shakespeare would predict with confidence a failure in such an experiment, but he would not have taken into account the support to the young aspirant supplied by the genius of the poet. There is an interest so deep and thrilling in the

story, such power in the situations, and such a charm in the language, that with an actor possessed of energy, a tolerable elocution, and some grace of deportment, the character will sufficiently interpret itself to the majority of an audience to win for its representative, from their delight, the reward of applause really due to the poet's excellence. A total failure in Hamlet is of rare occurrence. Every theatrical hero takes it up, and yet how many have there been, appearing and carrying off applauses in the part, who have been utterly incompetent to investigate the springs of emotion which agitate and perplex this amiable, reflective, and sensitive being? "There be players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly," in the character, who could as soon explain and reconcile its seeming inconsistencies, as translate a page of Sanscrit. Dr. Johnson, who so lucidly describes the mind of Polonius, has left us in his observations clear proof that he did not understand that of Hamlet; and audiences have been known to cheer innovations and traps for applause, which the following words of the text have shown to be at utter variance with the author's intention! My crude essay, like those of many others, was pronounced a success; but the probing inquiry and laborious study of my after-life have manifested to me how little was due to my own skill in that early personation. The thought and practice I have through my professional career devoted to it, made it in my own judgment, and in those of critics whom I had most reason to fear and respect, one of my most finished, though not the most popular, in my *répertoire*.

The Duke Aranza, in Tobin's charming play of 'The Honeymoon,' was my introduction to comedy; and, with Posthumus Leonatus in 'Cymbeline,' and the part of Orestes in Ambrose Philip's translation of Racine's 'Andromache,' confirmed me as the established favourite of the Newcastle audience. The season at Birmingham, beginning in May 1811, added to my list the parts of Frederick in Mrs. Inchbald's translation of Kotzebue's 'Natural Son,' Phocyas in Hughes' 'Siege of Damascus,' and Charles II. in Dimond's play of 'The Royal Oak.' An engagement was made with Pope, who had in former days shared the leading tragic characters at Covent Garden. He was said to have been an imitator of Clinch, known

in his day by the familiar name of Larry Clinch, who was reputed to have been a very close copyist of Barry, in voice and manner. An incident is related of Clinch, who was extremely popular with the Dublin audience, that acting one of his favourite tragic parts by command of the Lord Lieutenant, of course to a very fashionable assemblage, he had not noticed a slight derangement of his dress, which one of his admirers in the gallery perceiving, in extreme anxiety, leaned over the rail, and with his hand hollowed to his mouth, as if to carry his information to the ear of Clinch alone, in a subdued vociferation, intended for a whisper, called out, "Larry, honey, there's the smallest taste in life of your shirt got out behind you!" My father regarded Pope as a remnant of an old school, which I certainly thought, in these my "salad days," was one better worn out and incapable of resuscitation. The equestrian troop from Astley's circus had been introduced by Harris at Covent Garden, and were, as a matter of course, at the close of the London season, engaged by my father, and in the melodramatic pieces of 'Blue Beard' and 'Timour the Tartar,' written by Monk Lewis, attracted crowds to the theatre. This gave me a holiday, which I was sent to spend with my brother at Parkgate. I used this time to refresh my memory with the classics, which I had laid aside so long.

On my return to Birmingham, the 'Knight of Snowdon' was produced at considerable expense, but the equestrian mania left the remainder of the summer very dull. Catalani sang one night in compensation for the disappointment her illness had caused, and it was on this occasion that the audience would not be satisfied with even her assistance in 'God save the King,' until Tramezzani, the tenor of the Italian Opera, sang his verse. It was he who introduced alterations in the execution of the anthem, some of which are feebly retained at the present day. He had acted several nights in a sort of mono-dramatic operetta called 'Pigmalione,' and on the last night sang 'God save the King.' It had been heretofore little better than a dull psalm. But Tramezzani sang it in the style of a fervent and enthusiastically devout prayer, and quite electrified the house by the discrimination, and energy with which he invoked the divine aid in the stanza of "O Lord our God, arise," &c. From Birmingham my father

removed his company to Leicester, and I was sent to London to sit again to Dewilde in the character of Hamlet, which portrait, it was agreed, should be sent to the Exhibition of the next year. This was regarded by my father as one of the best advertisements, and, as I have since remarked, he set too high a value on these modes of attracting public attention, which must come under the ordinary term of "puffing." My experience has convinced me that the repute derived from it is usually short-lived, and the merits of those who have profited by it have been constantly open to question. Honest perseverance in the cultivation of the talent with which God may have blessed us, and the earnest purpose of aiming at the noblest ends of which it may be capable and to which it may aspire, is certain of recognition in the long run and bases itself on the firmest foundation. During the three or four weeks that my attendance on Dewilde detained me in London, I took up my abode at the York Hotel, Charles Street, Covent Garden. I frequented the theatres, and was an occasional guest with my friend Fawcett.• In the coffee-room of the hotel I could not help noticing, from his constant attendance there at breakfast and dinner, a gentleman of rather remarkable appearance. His dress was that of a clergyman; he wore a broad-brimmed hat, which in going out he pressed down almost to his eyebrows, giving an extraordinary effect to his *ensemble;* he was tall, well-featured, of excellent address, and seemingly a sort of oracle among the frequenters of the house. I had been in town about a fortnight, when he began to honour me with a bow in passing, and at length entering into conversation with me, proposed to order his dinner to my table—a compliment which I, of course, gladly accepted. I found him in conversation most agreeable, extensively read, and of superior taste and acquirement. He had got my name, &c., at the bar, and the theatre being one of the subjects of our discourse, he invited me to accompany him to Covent Garden Theatre on the following Monday to see Young in Othello, Charles Kemble acting, I think for the first time, Iago. We agreed to dine together early and go to the pit, where he always occupied a particular place.

On the Sunday previous I dined with Fawcett, and was lavish in my praise of the agreeable acquaintance I had

made, enlarging upon his gentlemanly address, his information, taste, &c. On Monday, our appointment being duly kept, we went together to the pit of the theatre. Young acted in his usual effective declamatory way, and my only observation was of something like a rude remark by a neighbouring visitor, as spoken at something which my companion had said. The next afternoon Fawcett, with whom I had some little business, inquired of me very particularly about the gentleman of whom I had been speaking on the Sunday. "Was he tall, dark-haired, bald, wearing his hat low down on his forehead?" &c. When to all these inquiries I answered in the affirmative, he broke out in a very alarming way, "My dear boy, it is a mercy I have met you. He is a man of most dreadful character. I would not have you seen with him for the world." "Why, good gracious!" I replied, "I was with him at Covent Garden last night." "Well, no one could have observed you, for Mrs. Fawcett and some friends noticed him in his place, but did not remark you. I do not wonder at your being pleased with his manners and conversation. He was once one of the most eloquent and popular preachers in London. I remember when on Sundays Great Queen Street used to be crowded with carriages in attendance at his chapel there. He is of very good family, and was secure of the highest preferment. His name was Dr. ——. Some very disgraceful conduct brought him within the danger of the law, from which, through interest, he was saved, but was obliged to give up his chapel, is shunned by his family and friends, and now takes his mother's name, Dr. Q——." All this news, as may be supposed, caused me, a youth inexperienced in the world, great agitation, and, as the only way to avoid the man, I resolved to change my hotel. This my good friend Fawcett approved, and taking me to the Old Slaughter Coffee House, St. Martin's Lane, and furnishing me with funds until I obtained my remittance from home, established my quarters there—one of those houses which, for good English dinners and excellent port wine, are among the pleasant memories of a bygone time.

When my sittings were ended I left London for Leicester, where I acted for several weeks, and then proceeded with my father to Newcastle. An addition to his regular company

was made in the engagement of Mrs. Whitlock, a sister of the Kemble family, who had made a comfortable independence in the United States, and had settled with her husband in Newcastle, where they were highly respected, and mingled in the best society of the place. She had something of the Kemble manner and voice, intelligence, but not sufficient theatrical talent to give her a high position among the English actors of that day. Her figure was unfortunately disproportioned, and as she must then have been upon the verge of sixty, her selection of the part of Elwina, in Hannah More's play of 'Percy,' was singularly injudicious, more especially as I, being then only eighteen, had to represent her lover, the youthful Percy. Her love of acting was so great as to blind her to her disqualifications, and she has told me that when on the stage she felt like a being of another world! How often have I envied in others, less fortunate than myself in public favour, this passionate devotion to the stage! To me its drawbacks were ever present.

During this season, in which 'The Royal Oak,' produced in a very efficient manner, was the early attraction, I acted King Charles, Daran in Reynolds's play of 'The Exile,' Chamont in Otway's 'Orphan,' Edward the Black Prince, Alexander in Lee's inflated tragedy, Fitzharding in Tobin's 'Curfew,' and made a very successful attempt in broad comedy, acting Rover, the strolling player in O'Keefe's farcical comedy of 'Wild Oats,' on the "bespeak" of the mayor. The engagement of "the horses" had been so productive at Birmingham, that my father would listen to no remonstrances on the score of taste against their appearance at Newcastle. Platforms and sawdust were again in requisition, and for six weeks the pieces of 'Blue Beard' and 'Timour the Tartar' were repeated with uninterrupted success, which enabled my father to discharge the debt, considerably above £100, for school bills at Rugby, which our friend William Birch had so generously taken on himself.

But a most formidable ordeal was in preparation for me. Mrs. Siddons, a name that even now excites in me something like a reverential feeling, was on the point of concluding her engagement at Edinburgh, previous to taking her leave of the stage in London. Her way lay through Newcastle, and she engaged to act there two nights. On hearing this some of her

friends in the town—and she had many—wrote to her (as she afterwards told my father) requesting she would make Lady Randolph one of her characters, my years and ardour suiting so well the part of Norval. The plays she fixed on were 'The Gamester' and 'Douglas.' Norval was a favourite character with me, but Beverley I had to study, and with the appalling information that I was to act it with Mrs. Siddons! With doubt, anxiety, and trepidation I set about my work, but with my accustomed resolution to do my very best. The language of the play is prose, and sufficiently prosaic; but I went to work at it with a determined though agitated spirit, and sought out in every sentence the expression that would most clearly illustrate the varying emotions of the character. The words of the part I was soon perfect in; but the thought of standing by the side of this great mistress of her art hung over me *in terrorem.*

After several rehearsals the dreaded day of her arrival came, and I was ordered by my father to go to the Queen's Head Hotel to rehearse my scenes with her. The impression the first sight of her made on me recalled the Page's description of the effect on him of Jane de Montfort's appearance in Joanna Baillie's tragedy of 'De Montfort.' It was

> "So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
> I shrunk at first in awe; but when she smiled,
> For so she did to see me thus abashed,
> Methought I could have compassed sea and land
> To do her bidding."

The words might have been written for this interview, for my nervousness must have been apparent to her on my introduction, and in her grand but good-natured manner she received me, saying, "I hope, Mr. Macready, you have brought some hartshorn and water with you, as I am told you are terribly frightened at me," and she made some remarks about my being a very young husband. Her daughter, Miss Cecilia Siddons, went smiling out of the room, and left us to the business of the morning.

Her instructions were vividly impressed on my memory, and I took my leave with fear and trembling, to steady my nerves for the coming night. The audience were as usual encouraging, and my first scene passed with applause; but in the next—my first with Mrs. Beverley—my fear overcame me to that degree that for a minute my presence of mind forsook me, my memory seemed

to have gone, and I stood bewildered. She kindly whispered the word to me (which I never could take from the prompter), and the scene proceeded.

What eulogy can do justice to her personations! How inadequate are the endeavours of the best writer to depict with accuracy to another's fancy the landscape that in its sublime beauties may have charmed him! "The tall rock, the mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood" may have "their colours and their forms" particularised in eloquent language, but can they be so presented to the "mind's eye" of the reader as to enable him to paint from them a picture with which the reality will accord? or will any verbal account of the most striking features of "the human face divine" convey a distinct portraiture of the individual? How much less can any force of description imprint on the imagination the sudden but thrilling effects of tone or look, of port or gesture, or even of the silence so often significative in the development of human passion! "L'art de déclamation ne laisse après lui que des souvenirs." As these are not transferable, I will not presume to catalogue the merits of this unrivalled artist, but may point out, as a guide to others, one great excellence that distinguished all her personations. This was the unity of design, the just relation of all parts to the whole, that made us forget the actress in the character she assumed. Throughout the tragedy of 'The Gamester' devotion to her husband stood out as the mainspring of her actions, the ruling passion of her being; apparent when reduced to poverty in her graceful and cheerful submission to the lot to which his vice has subjected her, in her fond excuses of his ruinous weakness, in her conciliating expostulations with his angry impatience, in her indignant repulse of Stukely's advances, when in the awful dignity of outraged virtue she imprecates the vengeance of Heaven upon his guilty head. The climax to her sorrows and sufferings was in the dungeon, when on her knees, holding her dying husband, he dropped lifeless from her arms. Her glaring eyes were fixed in stony blankness on his face; the powers of life seemed suspended in her; her sister and Lewson gently raised her, and slowly led her unresisting from the body, her gaze never for an instant averted from it; when they reach the prison door she stopped, as if awakened from a trance, uttered a shriek of agony that would

have pierced the hardest heart, and, rushing from them, flung herself, as if for union in death, on the prostrate form before her.

She stood alone on her height of excellence. Her acting was perfection, and as I recall it I do not wonder, novice as I was, at my perturbation when on the stage with her. But in the progress of the play I gradually regained more and more my self-possession, and in the last scene as she stood by the side wing, waiting for the cue of her entrance, on my utterance of the words, "My wife and sister! well—well! there is but one pang more, and then farewell world!" she raised her hands, clapping loudly, and calling out "Bravo! sir, bravo!" in sight of part of the audience, who joined in her applause.

It would not be easy to describe the relief I felt when this trying night was over. The next morning I paid my required visit at her hotel, and going through the scenes of 'Douglas,' carefully recorded her directions, and, in a more composed state than I had been on the previous day, took my leave. I was, in ordinary terms, "at home" in the part of Norval, and of course acted with more than usual care and spirit. But who that had ever seen it could forget her performance of Lady Randolph? In the part of Mrs. Beverley the image of conjugal devotion was set off with every charm of grace and winning softness. In Lady Randolph the sorrows of widowhood and the maternal fondness of the chieftain's daughter assumed a loftier demeanour, but still the mother's heart showed itself above all power of repression by conventional control. In her first interview with Norval, presented as Lord Randolph's defender from the assassins, the mournful admiration of her look, as she fixed her gaze upon him, plainly told that the tear which Randolph observed to start in her eye was nature's parental instinct in the presence of her son. The violence of her agitation while listening to old Norval's narration of the perils of her infant seemed beyond her power longer to endure, and the words, faintly articulated, as if the last effort of a mortal agony, "Was he alive?" sent an electric thrill through the audience. In disclosing the secret of his birth to Norval, and acknowledging herself his mother, how exquisite was the tenderness with which she gave loose to the indulgence of her affection! As he knelt before her she wreathed her fingers in his hair, parted it

from his brow, in silence looking into his features to trace there the resemblance of the husband of her love, then dropping on her knees, and throwing her arms around him, she showered kisses on him, and again fastened her eyes on his, repeating the lines,

> "Image of Douglas! Fruit of fatal love!
> All that I owe thy sire I pay to thee!"

Her parting instructions, under the influence of her fears for her son's safety, were most affectingly delivered. When he had fallen under the treacherous stab of Glenalvon, she had sunk in a state of insensibility on his body. On the approach of Randolph and Anna she began to recover recollection. To Randolph's excuses her short and rapid reply, "Of thee I think not!" spoke her indifference, and disregard of every worldly thing beyond the beloved object stretched in death before her. Leaning over him, and gazing with despairing fondness on his face, she spoke out in her heartrending tones—

> "My son!—My son!
> My beautiful, my brave!—How proud was I
> Of thee, and of thy valour; my fond heart
> O'erflowed this day with transport when I thought
> Of growing old amidst a race of thine!"

The anguish of her soul seemed at length to have struck her brain. The silence of her fixed and vacant stare was terrible, broken at last by a loud and frantic laugh that made the hearers shudder. She then sprang up, and, with a few self-questioning words indicating her purpose of self-destruction, hurried in the wild madness of desperation from the scene.

On that evening I was engaged to a ball "where all the beauties"—not of Verona, but of Newcastle—were to meet. Mrs. Siddons after the play sent to me to say, when I was dressed, she would be glad to see me in her room. On going in, she "wished," she said, "to give me a few words of advice before taking leave of me. You are in the right way," she said, "but remember what I say, study, study, study, and do not marry till you are thirty. I remember what it was to be obliged to study at nearly your age with a young family about me. Beware of that: keep your mind on your art, do not remit your study and you are certain to succeed. I know you are

expected at a ball to-night, so I will not detain you, but do not forget my words: study well, and God bless you." Her words lived with me, and often in moments of despondency have come to cheer me. Her acting was a revelation to me, which ever after had its influence on me in the study of my art. Ease, grace, untiring energy through all the variations of human passion, blended into that grand and massive style, had been with her the result of patient application. On first witnessing her wonderful impersonations I may say with the poet:

> "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken."

And I can only liken the effect they produced on me, in developing new trains of thought, to the awakening power that Michael Angelo's sketch of the colossal head in the Farnesina is said to have had on the mind of Raphael.

Little of interest occurred during the remainder of the season. I acted Rolla in a translation from Kotzebue's 'Virgin of the Sun,' a melodramatic kind of blustering hero, given in London to Young, where the play was produced chiefly on the speculation of attraction from the machinist's work in the representation of an earthquake. From Newcastle the company was transferred to Birmingham, where I continued my regular course of study, rehearsing, acting, and attending to the general business of the stage. Holman and his daughter appeared for a few nights, giving me another opportunity of seeing the acting of a bygone time. He was remarkably handsome, though inclined to obesity, his tendency to which he endeavoured to combat by a chicken diet. He was vain of his person, but very pleasing in his manners, well educated, having taken his Master's degree at Oxford, and ought to have reached a higher degree in his art if he had thought more of it and less of himself. He was said to have been in his youth very animated; so much so, as to be reported on one occasion, "In the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of his passion," to have lost so much his self-command as to miss his footing and precipitate himself over the footlights into the orchestra in the midst of the astonished musicians. But now the fire was spent, and in his acting he was as cold and artificial in his practised tones and movements as an automaton. He was to

be respected as a perfect gentleman, but nothing was to be gained from him in theory or practice on the score of art.

Some little time previous (I think in the winter) W. H. West Betty, the *ci-devant* young Roscius, after leaving Cambridge reappeared on the stage at Bath, where he played through a long and very successful engagement, much followed and caressed by the fashionables of the place. His figure no longer retained its symmetrical proportions, having grown bulky and heavy, but his face was very handsome. He, with well-calculated judgment, had determined on gleaning what he could from the country theatres before hazarding a venture in presence of a London audience. Being announced to perform two nights at Wolverhampton, my father, with the expectation that he would joyfully welcome his former playfellow, sent me over to see him and propose an engagement at Birmingham.

The coach set me down at his inn some time before his arrival, for which I waited with some impatience. He was to act Achmet that same evening, but there was no excitement in the town on that occasion. At about three o'clock the waiter gave me notice that Mr. Betty was coming, and I hastened out of the coffee-room to meet him, as he drove in his tandem into the gates. I introduced myself with all the heartiness of an old acquaintance, and was somewhat mortified by his cool reception of me. He gave directions about his carriage and horses, and went to the room prepared for him; I, a coach passenger, and one of little note, retired to the coffee-room, where I ordered dinner, and sat chewing the cud of my slighted advances. In a little time, as if he had bethought himself, he came into the room, and with an altered manner entered into conversation. On seeing the preparations for my dinner, he requested me to order it into his room, that we might talk over matters without fear of interruption. With this arrangement we discussed the subject of the proposed engagement, and he agreed to give my father the earliest notice of the time at his disposal. At night I saw him act, but seemingly in a careless way, the house being but indifferent. After some weeks he came to Birmingham, and played to moderately good receipts a round of his characters. His subsequent appearance in London was a failure, but I am disposed to think his talents were not fairly appreciated. It seemed as if the public resented on the grown

man the extravagance of the idolatry they had blindly lavished on the boy. There was a peculiarity in his level elocution that was not agreeable, a sort of sing-song and a catch in his voice that suggested to the listener the delivery of words learned by heart, not flowing from the impulse or necessity of the occasion; but when warmed into passion he became possessed with the spirit of the scene, and in witnessing as I have done his illustration of passages with all the originality and fire of genius, the conviction was pressed upon me that if he had not to his prejudice the comparison of his boyish triumphs, and the faulty manner derived from frequent careless repetition, he would have maintained a distinguished position in his maturer years.

In an engagement with Miss Smith I acted Lord Hastings in 'Jane Shore,' Percy in the play of that name, and Orestes in the 'Distrest Mother:' in the two latter characters I was sensible of considerable improvement. From the acting of Mrs. Siddons I had received a great lesson. Where opportunity presented itself, she never failed to bring out the passion of the scene and the meaning of the poet by gesture and action more powerfully, I am convinced, than he originally conceived it; but in giving life, and as it were reality, to the character she represented, she never resorted to trick or introduced what actors call "business," frequently inappropriate, and resulting from the want of intelligence to penetrate the depth of the emotions to be portrayed.

In contrast to the grand simplicity of Mrs. Siddons, Miss Smith's attempts at effect were as manifest as they were injudicious. I particularly remember one instance. In a mad scene of Elwina, she took her scarf from her shoulders, and busied herself for some time in arraying in it the fancied figure standing before her of her lover Percy, and while the drapery fell to the ground, smiled complacently on what she meant to be the accomplishment of her design, but to which the senses of the spectator gave a direct contradiction, as her own sense should have told her must be the case. She had a good voice, and what would be called a good stage face; but of the soul, that goes to the making of an artist, there was none. Vehemence and noise were with her, as with so many mediocre performers, the interpreters of passion. She for some years

retained in Drury Lane possession of the leading characters, *faute de mieux*, but made no impression on the public. Her engagement at Covent Garden did not extend beyond the last season, in which she was the Cora in the play of the 'Virgin of the Sun.' In the earthquake scene of that play, before alluded to, Alonzo rescues Cora from the falling ruins of the Temple of the Sun, in which scene the single good speech of Alonzo, acted by Huntley, a young performer of some talent, had place. But to the great distress and mortification of poor Huntley, who on the three or four first nights had been warmly applauded in his speech, Miss Smith was, every night after, overpowered by her feelings, and, fainting in his arms, he was obliged to carry her off. Young, who felt for the disappointment of the young actor, consoled him with the intimation that they would find a remedy for these periodical fainting-fits, and prepared the actors accordingly. At the usual point of the scene, Cora sank as usual into the arms of Alonzo, who, on bearing her out of sight of the audience, was met by a crowd of the players bustling about in affected eagerness of sympathy and concern, Young loudest among them to "carry the poor Cora into the green-room," where a roaring fire had been got ready. She was laid on a couch over the fender, cloaks laid over her, and a glass of hot water put to her lips; she soon recovered under these restoratives, and retired to her dressing-room, but was never known to faint again whilst she remained in the theatre.

At Birmingham this season I added but few new characters to my *répertoire*—among them Zaphna, in Hill's bald translation of Voltaire's 'Mahomet.' An incident at this period, originating in my appetite for a frolic, proved to me an experience that operated advantageously in the correction of precipitation in judgment through subsequent years. The announcement was shown to me in the green-room of one of our inferior actors, named Wilson, for the part of Iago at Sutton Coldfield, where a strolling company was acting in a barn. The name of the actor "from the T. R. Birmingham" was in large type in the playbill, "for the benefit of the manager." The fun I anticipated from the travestie that might be looked for, and the enjoyment of Wilson's consternation at seeing his chief among the audience, made it an easy business for me to persuade my father to order a chaise and make the eight miles'

journey; we arrived in time for the second scene of the play, and were soon detected in the pit (there were no boxes) by the keen-sighted Iago. The words of the tragedy were spoken without many lapses, and the performance, whimsical in some of its makeshifts, was more respectable, though very dull, than could have been expected. Returning home, I was remonstrating with my father on what now seemed to me his undervaluing of Wilson, whose performance of Iago was so very respectable, and so much beyond what I had looked for from his acting at Birmingham, where I thought he should be allowed higher characters and more opportunities. My father's retort was very homely, "You fool, William! cannot you see that he only appeared so much better to you because he was by the side of actors so much worse than himself?" I doubted the correctness of the remark at the time; but, a few nights after, seeing Wilson beside the more efficient members of the Birmingham company, I was obliged to confess the deception of my judgment, and that he was in truth as bad as I had at first thought him. This was a lesson, which taught me to measure a player by the conception of his poet, and by the severe truth of nature, guarding myself from being misled by any adventitious or false effects.

Before the close of the season, Mr. W. Dimond, the author of several successful plays, and manager of the Bath and Bristol Theatres, being one night in the theatre, sent round a note to express his wish to see me after the play on business. In a short interview in my dressing-room, he inquired if I should have any objection to make an engagement at Bath, which was always considered the stepping-stone to London. To this overture I stated my inability to leave my father, on which he begged me to bear in mind the willingness of the Bath management to negotiate with me whenever I should think of changing my present position.

The second visit of "the horses" gave me a holiday at Parkgate, and this season, which was not a profitable one, terminated my father's connection with Birmingham. From thence the company was removed in the autumn to Leicester, where Mrs. Jordan opened the theatre, acting two nights. If Mrs. Siddons appeared a personification of the tragic muse, certainly all the attributes of Thalia were most joyously

combined in Mrs. Jordan. With a spirit of fun, that would have out-laughed Puck himself, there was a discrimination, an identity with her character, an artistic arrangement of the scene that made all appear spontaneous and accidental, though elaborated with the greatest care. Her voice was one of the most melodious I ever heard, which she could vary by certain bass tones, that would have disturbed the gravity of a hermit; and who that once heard that laugh of hers could ever forget it? The words of Milman would have applied well to her—"Oh, the words laughed on her lips!" Mrs. Nesbitt, the charming actress of a later day, had a fascinating power in the sweetly-ringing notes of her hearty mirth, but Mrs. Jordan's laugh was so rich, so apparently irrepressible, so deliciously self-enjoying, as to be at all times irresistible. Its contagious power would have broken down the conventional serenity of Lord Chesterfield himself.

Our first play was 'The Wonder, a Woman keeps a Secret,' by Mrs. Centlivre, in which she was the Violante. I had to prepare to meet this unrivalled artist in the part of Don Felix. This was a trial to me; for I have always felt something like an instinctive reverence for genius, in whatsoever range of art or science it may have developed itself. It is in Macklin's clever comedy of 'The Man of the World,' that Sir Pertinax Macsycophant observes, "I never in my life could stand straight in the presence of a great man. I always bowed and bowed," &c. That flexibility of spine before men whom wealth or title makes great to the eyes of many, I have never felt but in the presence of those endowed by nature with that mental superiority which shines out in true genius; I have always laboured under the sense of my own comparative littleness, and for a time been oppressed with the idea of my inability to cope with them. I went to work therefore with my usual resolution to do my best with my part, but not without misgivings. At rehearsal I remarked, as I watched this charming actress intently through her first scene, how minute and how particular her directions were; nor would she be satisfied, till by repetition she had seen the business executed exactly to her wish. The moving picture, the very life of the scene was perfect in her mind, and she transferred it in all its earnestness to every movement on the stage.

When the cue for my entrance as Felix was given, it was not without embarrassment that my few first words were spoken; but her good-nature soon relieved me, for when I expressed the love that wrestled with a suspicious temper in the words, "True love has many fears, and fear as many eyes as fame; yet sure—I think—they see no fault in thee!" she paused, apparently in a sort of surprise, and with great and grave emphasis, said, "Very well indeed, sir!" This gave me again my perfect self-possession, and I was able to attend to all her remarks and treasure up the points, in which she gave greater prominence to the text. I have seen many Violantes since, but where was there one, who could, like her, excite the bursts of rapture in an audience, when she recovered from the deadly agony into which her fears of discovery had thrown her, and prepared herself for her triumph over her jealous lover? The mode in which she taught the Flora to act her parts was a lesson to make an actress. The trite quotation *laudator temporis acti* is equally thrown, as an accusation or a sneer, in the teeth of those who dwell upon the memory of what no longer exists. But it is not alone upon the strength of my single judgment that I set so high a value on the art which these gifted individuals displayed; the effect they produced on their audiences was such as succeeding aspirants have never been able to excel. Mrs. Jordan's engagement was finished by the 'Belle's Stratagem,' in which she acted Letitia Hardy.

The new Drury Lane Theatre was opened October 10th, 1812, with Lord Byron's address, which he had been solicited by the Committee, dissatisfied with those sent in for competition, to write; and upon the heels of this came forth the '*Rejected Addresses*' of James and Horace Smith, to make a laugh wherever a page of the work was opened. The Leicester season gave me practice, and added to my experience without any particular event to stamp it on my memory.

At Newcastle the theatre was opened by Mrs. Jordan before my arrival there, and I do not recollect what were her characters. My attention was given to the revival of Shakespeare's 'King Richard II.'; a play of the performance of which there is no record since Shakespeare's time, with due omissions. I had prepared it for representation, and it was produced with all the scenic effect that the limits of the theatre would admit of. It

was a complete success, and proved the attraction of the season; but though applauded in the acting, it has not kept the stage; and it has often excited the wonder of Shakespearean critics, that it should have lain so long neglected and still should enjoy so little popularity. The passion of its language and the beauty of its poetry (considered apart from effect in representation) have dazzled its readers, and blinded them to the absence of any marked idiosyncrasy in the persons of the drama, and to the want of strong purpose in any of them. Not one does anything to cause a result. All seem floated along on the tides of circumstance. Nothing has its source in premeditation. Richard's acts are those of idle, almost childish, levity, wanton caprice, or unreflecting injustice. He is alternately confidently boastful and pusillanimously despondent. His extravagant persuasions of kingly inviolability, and of heavenly interposition in his behalf, meet with no response in the sympathies of an audience. His grief is that of a spoiled, passionate boy; but the language in which it is expressed is in the loftiest strain of poetry and passion. Bolingbroke, by the concurrence of events beyond his calculation, is raised to the throne. We perceive character in him in his own description of himself in the 'First Part of King Henry IV.,' but in his entrances and exits through this play there is nothing to distinguish him: so by York's touching picture of the degraded Richard's humiliating entry into London our feelings are more deeply interested than by all the fretful wailings, reproaches, and denunciations, eloquent and earnest as they are, of the deposed King. York is a good, easy man, yielding to every impulse, bending to every breeze that blows. Aumerle is a courtier and conspirator, unmarked by any peculiarity of concerted plan or urgent motive. In all the greater plays of Shakespeare purpose and will, the general foundations of character, are the engines which set action at work. In 'King Richard II.' we look for these in vain. Macbeth, Othello, Iago, Hamlet, Richard III., &c., both think and do; but Richard II., Bolingbroke, York, and the rest, though they talk so well, do little else than talk, nor can all the charm of composition redeem, in a dramatic point of view, the weakness resulting from this accident in a play's construction. In none of his personations did the late Edmund Kean display more masterly elocution than in the third act of

'Richard II.;' but the admiration he excited could not maintain a place for the work in the list of acting plays among the favourite dramas of Shakespeare.

My other new characters this season were Dorax in an adaptation by Reynolds of Dryden's 'Don Sebastian,' Oroonoko in Southern's affecting tragedy of that name, King Richard III., and Mark Antony in Shakespeare's 'Antony and Cleopatra.' My attempt in Richard was received with approbation, though my figure was unsuited to the part; an objection I have always felt, even when borne along by the fervent applause of the audience. A humped-back tall man is not in nature, and I felt myself contradicting in my appearance the words Shakespeare had given me to speak,—an interference with that persuasion of reality under which, to be master of his audience, every actor should endeavour to bring himself. My aim in the study and presentation of a character has been always identical with that of the German actor Schroeder, who, in reply to the encomiums of his admirers on some particular passage or scene, would impatiently exclaim, "*Ai-je bien joué le rôle? Ai-je été le personnage?*"

My remembrance, too, of George Frederic Cooke, whose peculiarities added so much to the effect of his performance, served to detract from my confidence in assuming the crooked-back tyrant. Cooke's varieties of tone seemed limited to a loud harsh croak descending to the lowest audible murmur; but there was such significance in each inflexion, look, and gesture, and such impressive earnestness in his whole bearing, that he compelled your attention and interest. He was the Richard of his day; and in Shylock, Iago, Sir Archy Macsarcasm, and Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, he defied competition. His popularity far excelled that of Kemble; but he became the very slave of intemperance, remaining at times for days together in a state of debauch. His habits of inebriety subjected him frequently to the signal disapprobation of his audience, upon whom he would sometimes retort with more vehemence than delicacy. It is reported of him, that on one occasion, when a young officer in the stage-box made himself conspicuous in interrupting the play, Cooke went close up to him, and in his distinctly audible *pianissimo* addressed him: "D——n you, sir! You are an ensign? Sir, the King (God

bless him) can make any fool an officer, but it is only the great God Almighty that can make an actor!" At another time, in Liverpool, when scarcely able to go through his part, the audience most justly manifested their indignation; he stopped, and addressed to them this insolent affront: "Your applause or your disapproval are indifferent to me: there's not one brick upon another in your town, that is not cemented with a fellow-creature's blood!" alluding to the African Slave Trade, then principally carried on in Liverpool ships.

His face was only expressive of the sterner emotions, of which a whimsical evidence was afforded one evening, when, something the worse for wine or spirits he had drunk, he volunteered to exhibit to a young man sitting opposite to him the various passions of the human heart in the successive changes of his countenance. Accordingly, having fixed his features, he triumphantly asked his admirer, "Now, sir, what passion is that?" The young gentleman with complacent confidence replied, "That is revenge, Mr. Cooke." "You lie, sir; it's love!" was Cooke's abrupt rejoinder. But, when in possession of himself, his manners were most pleasing and his address most gentlemanly. Two of my schoolfellows, Henry and William Hanmer, sons of Sir Thomas Hanmer, in returning from the holidays to Rugby, supped one evening with my father after the play, in which Cooke had been acting. Cooke was of the party. Henry Hanmer, then a young man, subsequently a Colonel in the Guards, was quite charmed with his mild and agreeable manners and his interesting conversation. As of many others, it used to be said of him, that he was no one's enemy but his own; a shallow compliment, flattering the easiness of his disposition at the expense of more solid and indispensable qualities.

The part of Mark Antony was announced for my own "benefit," and signalised by an extraordinary occurrence. The partiality that was invariably manifested towards me in Newcastle, where I was to my latest appearance spoken of as William Macready or Mr. William, never failed to display itself on the occasion of my "benefit nights." Every place in the boxes had been taken some days before; and from the demand for tickets, an overflowing house was, as usual, looked for. But on the morning of the day, the box-keeper, with a very rueful

countenance, came up to our lodgings at some distance from the theatre, to inform my father that in the night there had been affixed on the box-entrance door a paper with doggrel rhymes, to the effect that I had "shamefully misused and even kicked" (!) a Miss Sulivan, a very pretty girl, an actress in the theatre, who was that night to perform Cleopatra. Although it was not an unfrequent practice of country actresses to endeavour to advance their interests by representing themselves as ill-used by the manager and creating a party feeling against him, I think she was perfectly innocent of any participation in this attempt to damage me in public opinion. My attentions at that time were addressed more pointedly to another frequenter of the green-room, than to her, and this could have been the only ground of dissatisfaction, if any existed; for the "manager's son" was of no little consideration in the limits of a green-room circle. The paper had attracted crowds before it had been removed, and the excitement was as great in the town as if the theatre had been blown up; but the general feeling was one of indignation at the calumny and the dastardly means adopted to circulate it. When informed of it, I determined not to hold conversation of any kind, nor to exchange one word with Miss Sulivan until I appeared with her on the stage at night. Friends, and persons not known before, thronged to the box-office in the morning to express their abhorrence of this infamous libel, and many stopped me in the street to testify the friendly sentiment toward me that pervaded the town on the subject. So monstrous an accusation, and its base intention, naturally agitated me; but in the consciousness of freedom from all violation of gentleman-like deportment towards the actresses my mind was clear, and resolved on the course to pursue. The night came; every "hole and corner," to use the common phrase, was filled long before the curtain rose. Upon my entrance with Cleopatra, Miss Sulivan, in my hand, the applause and shouting were deafening. When silence was obtained, I went forward, and addressing the audience, observed that, indebted to them as I was for many proofs of their favour, I was more obliged to them for the confidence in me they showed that night, than for all their previous indulgence; and, alluding to "the paper," stated that I had designedly not spoken to Miss Sulivan since I had heard of it, but that I would now request her to answer

before them to some questions. "Have I ever been guilty of any injustice of any kind to you since you have been in the theatre?" Her answer, "No, sir," was received with shouts. "Have I ever behaved to you in an ungentlemanlike manner?" "No, sir." Loud shouts repeated. "It is unnecessary to ask, but to satisfy the writer of the anonymous libel, have I ever kicked you?" Her answer of "Oh, no, sir!" was given amid the hearty exclamations and laughter of the excited crowds of box, pit, and gallery, and the play proceeded, but with little effect; for Antony, the voluptuary and doting spoiled child of fortune, was not within the compass of a tyro as I then was. This was the first attempt I had to encounter of this sort of stabbing in the dark. I lament to add, I became more familiarised to it as my experience extended; the object of my assailant was nothing less than my ruin; in one instance my life was aimed at, but that was not in England.

CHAPTER IV.

1813–1814.—First appearance as Hamlet in Glasgow—Further new parts—Power of rapid study—Sinclair—Mrs. Bishop—Dumfries—Acting with Betty—Newcastle—Criticism on Betty's acting—Separation from father—Brother enters the army as a volunteer private—Reconciliation with father—Comes of age—Risks of a player's life—Charles Kemble and his wife—Adaptation of 'Marmion'—Barnard Castle, Raby, Rokeby—Adaptation of Scott's 'Rokeby'—Father builds new theatre at Carlisle—Holiday at Holy Island—Escape from a quicksand—Performance to an audience of three persons at Berwick, on night of general illumination—Young and Emery—A wonderful effort of memory—Miss O'Neill's appearance at Covent Garden—Remarkable accident at Newcastle—Engagement at Bath.

THE Glasgow and Dumfries theatres were now to be let, and my father decided on trying his fortune with them. From Newcastle therefore he transferred his company to Glasgow. The opening night presented a very fair attendance, but on my father's remark to one of the old servants of the theatre, that the house was very good, "Aye, but," he replied, "it will be better when"—after a pause—"his honour there, I believe, comes out;" and his prediction was fulfilled in an improved appearance of pit, box, and gallery, to the tragedy of 'Hamlet,' in which I made my first bow before a Glasgow audience. That audience I remember with peculiar satisfaction—the knots of regular play-goers, that used to club together in the two corners of the pit, and with their murmurs of approval every now and then encouraged the young actor with the belief that they gave their thoughts to what was going on before them, were calculated to give confidence to his attempts, and made him feel that what he did was examined and scrutinised by a deliberate judgment.

In the course of this summer season I repeated the various

characters of my list, adding to them Captain Plume in Farquhar's 'Recruiting Officer,' a part I entered into with peculiar zest; Tangent in Morton's 'Way to get Married;' Lovemore in 'The Way to keep Him;' Dovicourt in Mrs. Cowley's 'Belle's Stratagem;' Puff in Sheridan's 'Critic;' Young Marlow in 'She Stoops to Conquer;' and Mark Antony in 'Julius Cæsar.' In this splendid theatre, which was the largest out of the metropolis, I derived benefit from the necessity I was under of more careful study and practice, and the improvement I made was perceptible to me.

On one occasion I had to task my powers of memory. The new play by Morton, called 'Education,' had been commenced with the usual parade of a novelty; and the part of Count Villars, a French refugee, acted by Charles Young in London, had been cast to one of the best of my father's company, an actor of some talent of the name of Grant. He had read his part at every rehearsal, and held it in his hand on the morning of the play; but before the rehearsal ended, he disappeared, and sent word to the theatre that he was too ill to act that night. The dismay was great, and there was much perplexity as to the measures to be adopted. I was sent for by my father to decide on the change to be made; but as this in theatres is regarded as the last resource and always prejudicial, I asked for the book and determined, if I could not perfect myself in the words of the part, to read it, rather than allow the play to be changed. It was two o'clock in the day. I ran through the scenes in rehearsal, and, going home, shut myself up to work at my task. An explanation was given to the audience of the reason of the change, and I had the satisfaction of getting through my undertaking without missing one single word in the acting of the part. At a very short notice, not to stop the production of the romance of 'Aladdin,' I undertook in it the part of the magician, previously cast to Grant, and, making something of a character of it, added to the effect of the piece.

In the course of the season an engagement was made with Sinclair, and Mrs. Bishop, who was accompanied by her husband, the eminent composer, afterwards Sir Henry Bishop. Sinclair had made a successful *début* in London, and gained some popularity in the song of "Pray, Goody, please to mode-

rate the rancour of your tongue," in the burletta of 'Midas,' which he was obliged nightly to sing three times at the call of the audience. He was rather a rough Scotchman, and it is related of him, that when John Kemble recommended him, in order to further his success, to place himself under D'Egville to acquire more ease and grace in his action and deportment, as he himself in his youth had taken lessons from La Pique, Sinclair with his strong Scotch accent replied, "I thank ye, sir; I'se vera weel where I be." During the Newcastle race week, my characters in comedy being novelties were successful and attractive, which induced me to give much attention to that department of my art.

A short season was made in the pretty town of Dumfries, where we had great difficulty in procuring lodgings, and were at last glad to find refuge in very humble ones. Players had left but an indifferent name there, and we suffered for the faults or misfortunes of our predecessors. After repeating most of my characters, and leaving a better opinion of our troop than we had found there, we returned for the short remainder of the year to Glasgow. I had laid out a plan, which would have greatly improved my father's fortunes, of keeping open at the same time the two theatres at Glasgow and Newcastle, but unhappily it was abandoned and too late regretted. At Glasgow 'King Richard II.' was produced with great care, but succeeded only in obtaining the applause of scanty audiences.

Betty, who continued his tour through the country, was engaged for a limited number of nights. He dined with us on the day of his arrival, and in the evening I was to act Frederic in 'Lovers' Vows.' The servant had been sent upstairs to get a pocket-handkerchief for me to put with my dress, which was to be sent to the theatre, and brought me down a white one. I asked the man, how could he suppose a common soldier, as Frederic is, would have a white pocket-handkerchief, ordering him to bring me a coloured one, on which Betty exclaimed, "Oh, my boy! you think of such things as these, do you?"

A misunderstanding with the proprietors of the theatre compelled my father to abridge his season; and, to supply him with funds, which were very much needed, I proposed to

study two characters in Betty's plays, which combination attracted two very full houses. In Dimond's play of 'The Royal Oak' I took the part of William Wyndham, Betty acting King Charles; and in Dr. Franklin's tragedy of the 'Earl of Warwick,' Betty took the Earl, and King Edward IV. was undertaken by myself. It was my first trial of strength with a player of celebrity, and in it I can bear testimony to the very clever acting of my opponent. In the scene where Warwick renders his sword to the king, he displayed an energy and dignity that well entitled him to the fervent applause lavished on him. I did my best with the two subordinate parts, and lost no ground in public estimation by the venture. Its success led to an engagement for its repetition in the ensuing season at Newcastle, for which town my father was to set off early the next morning. Unhappily, under perhaps the excitement of this unexpected stroke of good-fortune, my father's temper this evening was less within control than usual, and very angry and bitter words after we had returned to our lodgings made a severance between us, and we parted for the night with the understanding that in future we were not to occupy the same house. I was left with a portion of the company to act another week in Glasgow, whilst he went to open the Newcastle theatre. The receipts, including my benefit, were very large, and were paid at once into my father's account.

My brother and I set out in the second week of January with no very happy feelings. I had no longer a home; and my companion, my early playfellow and friend, could not be indifferent to the heaviness of heart under which I laboured. Our journey was long and tedious; the coaches then, except the mails, generally carried six inside, and we had from Edinburgh our full complement. The snow was falling fast, and had already drifted so high between the Ross Inn and Berwick-on-Tweed, that it had been necessary to cut a passage for carriages for some miles. We did not reach Newcastle until nearly two hours after midnight; and fortunate was it for the theatre and ourselves that we had not delayed our journey, for the next day the mails were stopped; nor for more than six weeks was there any conveyance by carriage between Edinburgh and Newcastle.

After some weeks a passage was cut through the snow for the guards to carry the mails on horseback, but for a length of time the communications every way were very irregular.

I took up my abode in a small respectable comfortable lodging, and was put upon a salary of three pounds per week. By the intermediation of friends a reconciliation took place with my father, but I continued my separate residence. The theatre had been well attended during Betty's performances, and I have pleasure in recalling the talent he displayed. In Aaron Hill's translation of Voltaire's 'Zaire,' there was a depth of feeling in his latter scenes of Osmyn that held the audience wrapt in breathless attention; and of all the representations I have seen of Sir Edward Mortimer, he came next to Kean (though *longo intervallo*, for Kean was unapproachable in that character). We met again in the same plays at Glasgow, and he had his full share of popular favour, though not quite satisfied with the measure dealt out to him. The houses were overflowing, and rendered a good harvest to him and the treasury of the theatre. I do not think he studied improvement in his art, and in consequence deteriorated by becoming used-up in the frequent repetition of the same parts.

'King John' was produced by me with much care; the company being very good for a provincial set, it was well acted. Huntley made a very fair country John, whilst Hubert, Salisbury, Pandulf, and Constance were most respectably filled. Falconbridge was a great favourite of mine, and I had drilled the Prince Arthur by frequent rehearsals to cause abundant tears and hysterics in the boxes. The play was repeated several nights, maintaining the course of a very productive season.

My brother* had expressed his earnest wish to enter the army, but the cost of a commission, with the expense of his outfit, was beyond my father's means, although the recent tide of good-fortune had put him in funds beyond his usual average. Whatever interest we could make was unavailably tried to procure an ensigncy in a Militia regiment, from which my brother might afterwards volunteer into the line. The only resource left to him was to accept a letter of recommendation from Colonel Birch, R.E., to Sir Thomas

* See note on Major Macready at end of this chapter.

Graham (afterwards Lord Lynedoch), commanding the British force in the Netherlands, and take his chance as a volunteer. He was accordingly provided with materials for uniform and all necessaries for campaigning, and in his sixteenth year took leave of us to embark at Harwich. It was with a heavy heart I parted from him, a boy in years, though with a strength of mind and purpose that justified my confidence in his bearing himself gallantly through the dangerous and doubtful path before him. He met on board with an officer, Captain Herbert, who showed him great kindness, and, being also on his way to join the army, travelled in company with him. Sir Thomas Graham gave him a very kind reception and appointed him to serve with the 30th Regiment, besides which, though messing with the officers, he carried his musket for three months, when he was gazetted ensign in the same regiment. For many weeks we heard nothing of him, and I remember well the agony of heart with which I read the particulars of the disastrous repulse from Bergen-op-zoom, picturing his lifeless form among the youthful victims of that unfortunate attempt. We heard in the course of some weeks that his regiment was not in the action, and after some trifling affair before a small fort on the Scheldt, the abdication of Napoleon and his retirement to Elba left our troops to enjoy themselves at peace in their quiet quarters.

My brother had been living with my father, and on his departure I could not be blind to the state of loneliness in which he would feel himself. After revolving the matter for some time in my mind, I imparted to our friends, the Misses Hedley, my intention of returning to his house, although I felt obliged to predict that I should one day be upbraided by him with seeking my own convenience in the act. These kind friends endeavoured to persuade me that it would not be so; but even if it should be, they were convinced I should derive satisfaction from the intention with which it was done. It may seem, that I judged hardly of my father in this anticipation; I hope not. Of the infirmity of my own temper I have been unhappily but too conscious; it has been the source of most of the misery I have known in life; but when, under strong excitement, his passion took the reins, there was no curb to the violence of his language. Words uttered in an infuriated mood are too often barbed with insult, and, rankling

long, can never be entirely forgotten. He had many good qualities, but like other men he had his faults, and was occasionally unscrupulous in the pain he inflicted. To others I believe he would acknowledge my value and join in commendation of me, but to myself he so depreciated my worth, that I did not feel sure of my ability to obtain a common livelihood. He was sensible, I had reason to think, of my motives in rejoining him, and for some time we lived together on the best terms, but my "prophetic soul" was eventually justified in an outburst of his impatience. Like many parents, he would expect me to be better informed on particular subjects than sundry of our acquaintance or friends, but to "know better than your father" was a crime, like parricide to Solon, impossible to be conceived. In the endeavour to state the whole truth and nothing but the truth, it is almost impossible to find characters of unmixed good, or to expect that that portion of humanity with which we may be bound in relationship should form an exception in its infallibility to mankind in general. My dear father had his failings intermingled with many amiable impulses, and probably his position as manager of a theatre may have tended to dilate in him that undue appreciation of his talents which I have noticed conspicuous in many Irishmen. A theatre is like a little kingdom, shut out from intimacy and sympathy with the little world around it, in which the little monarch has his flatterers and courtiers, as sycophantic and subservient as in real courts. Upon his talents, his virtues, and even on his person, he receives the adulatory homage of those he employs; and with such an exalted opinion of himself, as this incense must excite, it cannot be a matter of surprise if he should not always hold the scale of justice with a steady and impartial hand. My father was impatient of opinions in opposition to his own, and as on many subjects I thought differently from him, his displeasure was at times very painfully felt by me. In fact, I was kept too much in a dependent state, when I ought to have been extending my experience by more direct and unrestrained commerce with the youth of my age and the world about me.

A few weeks had elapsed after my brother's departure, when an unsettled account with the Birmingham proprietors, which threatened embarrassment, induced my father to withdraw from

the theatre and take up his abode at Carlisle, where he was quite unknown. In the meantime our prosperous career was uninterrupted at Newcastle. A drama had been successfully introduced at Drury Lane, taken from Mrs. Sheridan's pleasing and instructive Eastern story of 'Nourjahad,' entitled 'Illusion, or the Fortunes of Nourjahad.' From the original story I added some passages and bestowed all possible pains on its production: Huntley acted the Sultan, and Nourjahad was my character. It was very attractive, followed by the romance of 'Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp,' in which for several nights I acted Aladdin; and the daily accounts of our receipts sent to my father at Carlisle in his own words "astonished him." It was during the successful run of these pieces, that I had just cause to condemn myself for violent and intemperate resentment of some omission or mistake committed by the prompter, whose name was Skinner. How bitterly have I reproached myself for these escapes of passion!

In the course of this winter we read of the appearance and disappearance of Mr. Huddart in the character of Shylock at Drury Lane, and of some other *débutants*. Soon after another announcement was made of "a Mr. Kean" in the same character. When I heard it, I remembered that it must be the performer I had seen in the ballet of 'Alonzo and Imogene' in the Birmingham theatre. I thought the committee must be at their wits' end, and indeed there had been so many failures, the theatre was almost in a bankrupt state; but how was I surprised to hear and read of the intelligent and energetic performance of the new actor in Shylock, and further astonished to receive the accounts of his triumphant success in Richard III., which had placed him, as an artist of extraordinary and surprising genius, at the head of his profession, exciting the admiration of the play-going world. In Othello he confirmed public opinion, which justly recognised in it a masterpiece of tragic power and skill.

It was in this year (1814) I attained the age of twenty-one, and my birthday was kept by an entertainment I gave the company in the green-room, followed by a dance on the stage after the audience had left the theatre. In strict candour I ought not to omit the mention of those errors of my youth that might have entailed more serious consequences. At this time I had become entangled in an attachment to a lady some nine years

older than myself, by which I might have been led into greater indiscretions than any I may have been guilty of. In liabilities such as these, to which unreasoning youth is exposed, lies one danger of a theatrical life. Many of both sexes, to their honour, have passed untempted and unscathed through this ordeal; but where so much familiarity exists, where intimacy becomes almost unavoidable in the frequent intercourse of the green-room and the stage, the wonder is rather that so many should preserve their respectability, than that resistance to allurements so constantly present should so often be overthrown.

Charles Kemble and his wife performed in engagements not very lucrative, though Kemble's young Mirabel in Farquhar's 'Inconstant' was a most finished piece of acting. His tragic efforts were on the contrary laborious failures. In Macbeth, Hamlet, and Richard III., he was Charles Kemble at his heaviest. On the other hand, his Richmond was chivalrous and spirited, and his Cassio incomparable. He was a first-rate actor in second-rate parts. My own essays during the remainder of the season were in Benedict, and one of Reynolds' farcical heroes, Gingham in the 'Rage.' For my benefit I ventured on Shakespeare's Benedict, followed by an adaptation by myself of Walter Scott's 'Marmion,' retaining the language of the poem, in which I acted Marmion, and found its scenes productive of very considerable dramatic effect. Passion Week gave me a respite, which I really required, and thinking myself entitled to the enjoyment of a holiday I proposed to my father a little tour as a relaxation earned by hard work.

Accordingly, in a post-chaise, a vehicle now known but by name, we directed our course to Barnard Castle, visiting on our way the baronial edifice of Raby Castle. The grandest feature is its entrance-hall, through which the carriages of its guests are driven to set down their company. To one to whom the dim recollection of Warwick was the only interesting vestige of the romantic times living in his memory, the sight of so noble a fabric, with all the heroic deeds an ardent imagination would cluster round it, was a sort of intoxication. The association of Richard III. gave the picturesque ruins of Barnard Castle a peculiar interest to me, and I would have lingered about them much longer than suited the appetite of my kind companion. We reached Greta Bridge after dark, but I was up early next

morning to visit the Roman camp behind our inn. This little tour, in which I wandered through landscapes of romantic beauty, and seemed to track the steps of the characters in 'Rokeby,' the poem I had only lately read, was to my inexperienced and enthusiastic mind a supreme delight, and one to the remembrance of which I can even now recur with pleasure. We followed the Greta's course, inspecting the tower and tomb of Mortham, the antiquities and pictures in Rokeby Hall, and as we wandered by the side of "the tumbling flood," to its confluence with the Tees, Risingham, Wilfred, Redmond, Matilda, and the rest were present to my active fancy. I had never known a higher or purer enjoyment. Through Bishop Auckland and its rich park, we reached Durham in time to visit the magnificent Cathedral and the Castle; and, sleeping there that night at the delightful inn called the Wheatsheaf, we returned to Newcastle and to work the next morning.

The remainder of the season was of short duration, but my time was wholly occupied. Lackland in O'Keefe's opera of 'Fontainebleau,' Beverley in Murphy's comedy 'All in the Wrong,' and Belcour in Cumberland's 'West Indian,' were studied and acted by me,—Beverley but imperfectly studied, and very inefficiently acted; Belcour with so much care, that I was accustomed to consider it as one of my ablest personations. The time not engrossed by the calls of the theatre was diligently employed, though scarcely sufficient for the completion of the work I had in hand for my father's benefit night, which was to adapt Scott's poem of 'Rokeby' for representation, prepare it for acting, and study myself the part of Bertram of Risingham. I remember well one night writing away hour after hour: hearing no clock and having no watch near me, I thought I would look out and see what sort of a night it was. My surprise was great on opening the shutters to see the flood of daylight burst into the room. It was not quite five o'clock, when the freshness of the air and the bright beauty of the morning enticed me from my work, and lured me to a long walk through some of the most picturesque scenery of the neighbourhood. I came home to breakfast, as I thought refreshed and ready to renew my labours, but before ten o'clock I was stretched on the sofa in a profound sleep which lasted till noon. The season closed very successfully with my father's benefit;

and 'Rokeby,' acted on the occasion, took a more compact and dramatic shape than 'Marmion,' and laid strong hold on the attentions and feelings of the audience; there are indeed many scenes in it eminently calculated for effect in acting: if it had been more popular, no doubt it would have undergone conversion to a dramatic arrangement.

During my father's absence at Carlisle he had not been idle or inactive. There was no theatre in the city; and this to him appeared so indispensable to the population, and likely to be so profitable to himself, that he negotiated for a piece of ground at the back of the High Street, and made terms with a builder for the erection of one. My poor dear father was the architect. There was little pretension to design in the construction—the main object being the greatest possible number within the smallest possible space—and this was accomplished in a brick building, the four rectilinear walls of which allowed no lobby for the audience, and scarcely room behind the scenes for the actors and servants to pass along. The boxes were divided from the pit in front of them by a covered railing, both rising on a gently inclined plane from the orchestra. The gallery occupied the space directly above the boxes. The lane which ran along the side of the building was the green-room, from which the performers were summoned at rehearsal. The dressing-room for the "star," as any visitor was called, measured about five feet by six, and how the performer managed was a mystery. But entrusted to unskilful hands it cost, according to my father's account, above £600, which the productive season at Newcastle enabled him to disburse. To employ the time, until it was ready for his reception, he rented the theatre at Berwick-on-Tweed.

During the first three weeks of the season there I went for relaxation and bathing to Holy Island. St. Cuthbert, to whose residence its holiness is to be ascribed, its ancient name being Lindisfarn, is recorded to have quitted it for the greater solitude and tranquillity of the Faroe Islands, which stand out in the distance of the German Ocean, finding his devotions and meditations disturbed by the racket and active pursuits of the inhabitants. But to follow out the tradition, the gulls and sea-birds in the lonely isles made more clamour than the fishermen and their wives, with the monks and nuns to boot, and he was therefore driven back again to hallow Lindisfarn

with the odour of his sanctity. I do not think the population of the island—men, women, and children—could have exceeded a hundred, if they amounted to that number, and these, with the exception of the clergyman, were an amphibious race, either pilots or engaged in the fisheries of the coast. It seemed as if a long sojourn there would induce the forgetfulness of one's own language, so rare were the opportunities for conversation: and I was forced back upon Homer, Cicero, and Virgil for companionship and intercourse with other minds, a renewal of acquaintance which in the course of my long life I have found very serviceable. I certainly at times felt the weariness of solitude, but I became attached to the primitive little place. The approach to it on the south of the island is across the narrow strait which forms the entrance to the harbour, a very commodious one in stormy weather; but at low water the sands are sufficiently dry on the western side for pedestrians (who do not object to carry their shoes and stockings) to cross over, and this was of old considered a very efficacious pilgrimage.

The ruins of the abbey were very striking, one of the lofty arches of its roof, apparently of single blocks, remaining in isolated grandeur, and, though not nodding to its fall, yet adding to the effect of its interest by its apparent insecurity. There is a small church near the ruins, in which a country clergyman, not answering in his "unaffected grace" to Goldsmith's beautiful portrait, used every Sunday to divide his discourse into several parts, which were respectively introduced by the same discriminating announcement, "furder and agen." I have no doubt the spirit of reform, so active elsewhere, has not been wanting to improve the pulpit here. On a little conical rock jutting into the sea and commanding the entrance to the harbour, is perched a small castle that looks across the bay upon the towers of Bamborough, which form a noble termination to the view. The only history I ever heard of this small fortress was, that the flag of the Pretender was hoisted upon it, when he was on his march to Derby. My amusements here were boating and riding. I pulled a very good oar, and took pleasure in rougher water than my boat's crew sometimes considered altogether safe.

In riding, I one day escaped very narrowly a frightful danger. At low water a very extensive bank of sand is left

dry to the north, in view of Berwick. With the intention of taking a gallop along this tempting course, I was making my way to it, not noticing the mottled appearance of the sand, puckering into black veins and holes, as it declined from the shore to rise again to the long high bank before me. Suddenly my horse plunged up to the saddle in a black soft mud, and instantly with an instinct of danger made the most violent efforts to disengage itself, splashing up the mud in a frantic manner, and at length having turned herself round (all power of guidance was lost to me with death before my eyes), she galloped furiously to the beach, where she stood panting as if her sides would burst, whilst I, sitting droopingly in the saddle with the cold sweat beading on my forehead, could only thank God for the unexpected preservation.

My lodging, one of the best in the little village, if the few houses there could be dignified by the name, was very clean and comfortable; my dinners of poultry or fish, and sometimes meat, unexceptionable to a good appetite. My water excursions, very exciting; my saunterings about the abbey, recalling the trial of poor Constance, and wondering where her "Vade in pace" might be situated; my wandering over the sand-hills or along the wind-beaten shore declaiming Shakespeare and Milton to the incoming tide, with occasional nocturnal expeditions to get a shot at the wild ducks that lay in immense clusters on a kind of lagoon at a little distance: these, with periodical conferences with my landlady and musings over my classics, were the exercises with which I made the days of my vacation pass quickly and pleasantly by.

Recalled to business, I went to Berwick, where to my dismay I found the theatre in the inn-yard and up a very long flight of steps. The upper part of an old malt-house had been converted into the temple of the drama, and, saving the awkwardness of the approach, had been fashioned into a very respectable one. Here I acted some of my principal characters to very good audiences, and ended the season with very satisfactory results. It was in this season that a general illumination had been ordered for the triumph of the Allies over Napoleon. To my surprise my father gave directions for a performance on that evening. It was in vain that I reasoned with him, stating my conviction that there would not be one person present. He was

pertinacious in his resolution; but I could not believe he would persist, until I saw the playbills advertising 'Laugh when you can' (the title a satire on the proceeding) and the 'Poor Soldier.' My father took the part of Gossamer; the players could hardly be persuaded that he was in earnest, but the night arrived and they were obliged to dress for their parts. At seven o'clock the prompter went to my father's dressing-room, knocked, and inquired, "Sir, shall I ring in the music? there is no one in the house!" "Certainly, sir; ring in the music," was his answer. The music was rung—the musicians went into the orchestra and began to play. I went into my father's room, and informed him, that "there were two boys in the gallery and one man in the pit, and I would go into the boxes, that there might be an appearance in all." Accordingly I took my place in the centre box, and, with difficulty preserving a demure countenance, saw my father very gravely and indeed sternly begin the part of the laughter-loving Gossamer, indignant with the performers, who had difficulty in restraining their disposition to make a joke of the whole affair. A scene or two was quite sufficient, and I left the remaining three-quarters of the audience to their amusement, preferring a walk round the walls of "our good town" on a lovely summer evening, until the inhabitants should begin to light up. About nine o'clock I thought I would look in again, to see whether the farce was really going on. The play had just concluded, and the pit audience went out. The two boys remained in the gallery, evidently tired out with the dulness of their evening; but when the musicians reappeared in the orchestra, and began the overture of the afterpiece, it seemed as if their power of endurance was exhausted, and leaning over the gallery balustrade one of them, with a violent gesture of his arm, called out, "Oh, dang it, give over!" and both walked out, leaving the players to undress themselves and go out in their own clothes to see the illuminations.

For the Newcastle race week Charles Kemble and his wife were re-engaged, and the performances strengthened by my co-operation. In 'Venice Preserved' we were the Jaffier and Pierre; in 'The Wonder,' with Charles Kemble as Don Felix, Mrs. C. Kemble as Violante, the part of Colonel Briton was studied for the occasion by me; and in 'The Rivals,' Charles Kemble

taking Falkland, and his wife Julia, I was the Captain Absolute. They were paid £100 for their services, and my father's profit on the week was very remunerative. From hence I returned to Holy Island and my father to Carlisle to open his new theatre, which was almost nightly filled and promised soon to reimburse him for his outlay. The time spent by him with advantage there brought us to the Newcastle Assizes; and here again my suggestion was adopted of engaging Young, with whom I promised to take the second characters. Emery, whose representation of a Yorkshireman was reality itself, was in the neighbourhood, and on very moderate terms, acting in the afterpieces, made up very attractive bills of fare. Young and Emery together in a country theatre was a very unusual display of histrionic talent—my local reputation in addition still further stimulated public curiosity. To 'Hamlet' and 'Richard III.' (which Young had tried, not very successfully, against Kean's popularity in London) the houses were well filled, but were greatly exceeded by the receipts to the plays of 'The Iron Chest,' in which Young acted Sir Edward Mortimer, Emery Orson, and myself Wilford; 'The Revenge,' with Young in Zanga, and myself Don Alonzo; 'Education,' with Young and Emery in their original parts of Count Villars and the Yorkshire Farmer, myself taking the young man, whose name I forget: but I do not forget the life-like acting of Emery, whose perfectly natural manner in his dialogue with me was so irresistible, that I could not suppress upon the stage the laughter he provoked. In the representation of countrymen, such as Farmer Ashfield, Zekiel Homespun, &c., he was unapproachable; in the part of Robert Tyke, in 'The School of Reform,' he rose to the display of terrific power. He has been followed by no one that could compare with him. Young was of course greatly and deservedly applauded: his grand declamatory style wound up the speeches of Zanga and Mortimer with telling effect. His Richard was not good, but his performance of Hamlet (a character that so few are found to agree upon) had as usual its very numerous admirers.

He gave me a little advice or caution, which was kindly meant, although it did not then carry conviction with it. "Young gentleman, you expend a degree of power unnecessarily; half the energy and fire that you employ would be more than sufficient. You will only waste your strength, if you do

not bear this in mind." Experience justified his remark, and taught me the lesson of increasing the effect of force in acting by economising its use.

At Carlisle, where I had been inquired for, I repeated my favourite characters to audiences that tested the continent powers of the little building; but my father's outgoings having absorbed his receipts, he was in perplexity and embarrassment how to reach Leicester, and how to find a company to act there with him. In the very nick of time the Haymarket Theatre suddenly closed, and left open to his choice several very valuable performers, poor Tokely among them, a stroke of chance that confirmed him in his Micawber confidence that "something must turn up." Still the ready funds were wanting—and when, to my inquiry what was his immediate need, he told me that £10 would be everything to him at that moment, I astonished and delighted him by producing £20, out of £30 which I had saved from my weekly allowance. He set out in joyful expectation of good receipts in the public weeks (as races, fairs, &c., were termed) at Leicester, and left me to conclude a most successful campaign at Carlisle and carry on the company to Dumfries, where I acted a fortnight to full houses. Our corps were few in number, several having been draughted off to Leicester, and our stock of plays was therefore limited, but the attraction was so uniformly good, that a night closed would have been so much money refused. All our available plays were arranged; but for one night there was none within our scanty company's means. It occurred to me that all the players had acted in 'The Foundling of the Forest,' and sending for the prompter to ascertain it, I desired him to bring me the book that I might study Florian for the occasion. "Sir, there is no book," was his answer. This seemed checkmate, but from having got up the play at Newcastle, and having been present several times at its performance three years before, I recollected much of the part; and observing to him that as the players would be able to repeat to me their cues (*i.e.*, the ends of my speeches to them), I would answer for managing it, and ordered the play to be announced. At rehearsal I found there was no hitch; numerous places were taken in the boxes, and all went off with great applause from a very full attendance.

My father now changed places with me, he coming to the public weeks at Dumfries and I proceeding to Leicester, where I was to act a month and close the season. Fortune seemed still to be on my side, and the whole period of my stay there was one unbroken course of prosperous work. It was during my sojourn here that a young actress, who had been a great favourite in Dublin, made her appearance in London at Covent Garden, and at once united all voices in her praise. Her beauty, grace, simplicity, and tenderness were the theme of every tongue. Crowds were nightly disappointed in finding room in the theatre to witness her enchanting personations. Juliet, Belvidera, Mrs. Beverley, Mrs. Haller, were again realities upon the scene, attested with enthusiasm by the tears and applauding shouts of admiring thousands. The noble pathos of Siddons' transcendent genius no longer served as the grand commentary and living exponent of Shakespeare's text, but in the native elegance, the feminine sweetness, the unaffected earnestness and gushing passion of Miss O'Neill the stage had received a worthy successor to her.

My directions were, in leaving Leicester, to bring my two sisters, who had been several years at Miss Linwood's school there, home with me. They were accordingly the companions of my journey to Newcastle, where a suite of rooms on the first floor of a house in Pilgrim Street, next door to the Queen's Head Hotel, had been taken for us. My father joined us here. I should not be so particular in noticing the precise locality of our new dwelling, but for an incident that left its impress vividly on my memory. One afternoon—it was a Saturday—my elder sister had retired to lie down in her bedroom for relief from a distracting headache. My father and self were seated after dinner at table, writing letters. The streets were empty, for a storm such as I have rarely seen was tearing through them with hurricane violence. With a bright fire in the grate and a decanter of port wine before us, we might well have supposed ourselves secure from any inconveniences of the tempest, though the pavement was actually flooded with the torrents pouring down, and tiles and slates were hurled through the air by the fury of the gale. A twofold evidence was this day given of our lives' uncertainty. A tremendous crash, that shook the whole house as if it were tumbling

in ruin, startled us from our seats; the room was instantly filled with thick dust and smoke, out of which we lost no time in escaping. I rushed into my sister's room, and lifting her from her bed hurried her down stairs into the hall passage, where all the inmates of the house, servants, &c., pale and out of breath, were assembled in fearful consternation. Hurried questions were passed: "What is it?" "Are we safe?" "The roof has given way!" "Are all here?" At once the mistress of the house shrieked out, "My bairns! my bairns!" and darted with me up the stairs to the room above that in which my father and I had been sitting. We flung open the door; the chimney had fallen in, breaking down the roof, crushing into the room below one whole side of the flooring of the attic, and dividing the room into two triangular spaces; in the one nearest the door was a large old mahogany table with two flaps reaching nearly to the ground. Beneath this table, in the midst of all the wreck and rubbish, were the two children. The innocent little creatures, ignorant of the danger they had escaped, were playing together. The mother seized one and I the other, and with full hearts we carried them down to the lower storey. I never can forget the emotion of that poor mother. Some friendly neighbours accommodated our unhoused hosts for the night, and we took refuge in the hotel next door until we could find a home in more private apartments.

A domestic imbroglio now arose that altered the current in which my life had hitherto run. A collision of opinions between my father and myself on the subject of some engagements in the theatre, to which I took well-founded exceptions, left me no alternative, as I thought, but to withdraw from the embarrassing position in which such arrangements would have placed me, and "seek my fortunes where they would be kinder." I would have made, and indeed tendered, sacrifices to avoid this separation; but my father was inflexible in adhering to measures which I conceived in every way objectionable. On the strength of the overtures previously made to me by the Bath manager, I wrote to him that I was now at liberty to engage, and after a brief negotiation it was agreed that the difference between us in regard to the pecuniary amount, for which we severely contended, should be made

dependent on my success. As a parting service to my father I acted one week at Newcastle, adding the Stranger and Othello to my list of characters, and with a heavy heart, under the depressing uncertainty of prospect in the venture I was about to make, I took leave of my family and friends, and bade adieu to the town in which my residence from my first entrance was one unbroken record of encouragement and kindness. At the last moment, the night before my departure, my father seemed to have regretted the course he had adopted, and asked me if it was not possible to break off with the Bath management; but my word was pledged, and could not be retracted. Just before setting out on my journey I received the offer of a very lucrative engagement for a fortnight from H. Johnston, who had taken the Glasgow Theatre, which I gladly accepted. By coach and mail, I made the best of my way to Bath, where, on my arrival, I got a flutter at the heart on seeing my name in large letters in the playbills to appear as Romeo on the 26th of December (1814). This sort of nervous emotion at the sight of my name posted upon the walls never left me to the latest moment of my professional career, and I have often crossed over to the other side of the street to avoid passing by a playbill in which it might be figuring.

NOTE.—Edward Nevil Macready, born at Birmingham, May 29th, 1798, joined as a volunteer, at the age of sixteen, the 2nd battalion of the 30th Regiment, then serving in Holland under Lord Lynedoch, and in the following year fought at Quatre Bras and Waterloo. All the officers of his company having been killed or disabled early in the day of the great battle, he commanded it through great part of the action and personally led it on at different periods of the day, when only an ensign; and the gallantry he displayed on this occasion procured his promotion without purchase to a lieutenancy. His next active service was in the Mahratta war, when he took part in the siege and capture of the strong hill fort of Asseerghur, although at the time labouring under so severe an illness that it was with the greatest difficulty he could obtain leave to share in the attack. On General Sir John Wilson's appointment as Commander-in-chief in Ceylon, Captain Macready accompanied him as military secretary, which post he filled for a period of eight or nine years. At a farewell dinner given to the general, on his leaving the island, the governor, Mr. Stewart Mackenzie, in his speech paid a gratifying tribute to the services and character of the military secretary, as distinguished by the essential qualities of an intelligent officer and a gentleman. In addition to this public testimony to his abilities and worth, he received a private acknowledgment of the esteem in which he was held, in the form of a valuable gold box, in the name of "his friends," a title which comprehended

every officer then in Ceylon. On obtaining an unattached majority he left the 30th Regiment, in which he had endeared himself to all, and withdrew from active service. In 1840 he married Miss Rolls, and accepted the appointment of A.D.C. offered him by Mr. Stewart Mackenzie, then Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. On leaving this post he spent some years in foreign travel. He died very suddenly on the 4th of November, 1848.

Major Macready was the author of "A Sketch of Suwarrow and his last Campaign." Mrs. Edward Macready designed and published, in 1839, a series of spirited etchings of Macready in some of his principal characters and scenes.—ED.

CHAPTER V.

1814–1815.—Description of Bath in 1814—Appearance in Romeo, &c.—Actors more sensitive to criticism than other artists—Proposed engagement with Harris at Covent Garden declined—Performances at Dublin—Visit to London—Comparison of Kean and Cooke in Richard III.—Mistake of "points" in acting—Kean in Richard III. at Drury Lane—Supper with Kean—His powers of conversation and mimicry—Miss O'Neill in Juliet at Covent Garden.

AMID the revolutions of the times which my life has witnessed, few places can have undergone more extreme changes than the city of Bath. At this time its winter season was to the fashionable world the precursor of that of the London spring. Houses, lodgings, boarding-houses, were filled; rooms in the hotel must be engaged at an early date. The hotels, of which there were several, were of the first order, but conspicuous among them were the York House and the White Hart. The *tables d'hôte* at these houses were frequented by military and naval officers, men of fortune of the learned professions, and graduates of the Universities. The company was in general most agreeable, and the dinners excellent, usually, with wine and dessert, standing at half a guinea per head. Each day a little after noon the Pump Room, a sort of exchange for news and gossip, was literally crammed full with its throng of idlers. Monday and Thursday evenings were given to balls (usually crowded) at the great rooms; Wednesday and Friday to those (not so well attended) at the lower rooms; Tuesday to Ashe's concert, at which the leading vocalists were engaged; and Saturday to the theatre, where again was a *réunion* of the votaries of fashion. Now all has disappeared. At about three o'clock the pavement of Milsom Street would be so crowded

with gaily dressed people, and the drive so blocked with carriages, that it was difficult to get along except with the stream. I have of late years looked down the same street at the same hour and counted five persons! The Lower Crescent was a Sunday promenade between morning and afternoon service, presenting the same conflux of visitors. The life of the London world of fashion was here on a reduced scale, and the judgment of a Bath audience was regarded as a pretty sure presage of the decision of the metropolis. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if, distrustful as I seem constitutionally to have been, I should have approached this trial with something like trepidation. But "*αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν*"* was my motto, and with that resolve I went determinedly to work.

A neat little drawing-room opening into the bed-room, No. 5, Chapel Row, Queen Square, was my new home. I felt its loneliness, nor did my introduction to the performers at the rehearsal tend at all to inspirit me. Being announced as "a star," without having the London stamp, I was looked upon with a supercilious coldness, as if challenging my right to take such precedence before my fellow-actors. The stage manager, Mr. Charlton, was a very kind gentleman, and, enforcing all my directions, enabled me to get through all my rehearsals very smoothly. The romance of 'Aladdin,' expensively got up, was the afterpiece, which on a Christmas night would ensure a full audience, and every part of the theatre was crowded to overflowing. My reception, if I had wanted heart, was hearty enough to give it; but though dejected and misgiving in the contemplation of my task, I was on my entry into the lists always strung up to the highest pitch, and, like the gladiators in the arena, resolute to do or die. The applause increased in each scene, until in the encounter with Tybalt it swelled into prolonged cheering, and, to use a homely phrase, I then found myself firm in the saddle. The end of the tragedy was a triumph, and I returned to my little homely lodging, to write off to my family the news of my success.

'Romeo and Juliet' was repeated, and followed by 'Hamlet,' 'The Earl of Essex,' 'Orestes,' &c. The newspapers, with one exception, were lavish in their praise. The dissenting critic

* "Ever to excel."—Ed.

based his objections on my disqualifications for a great actor in my want of personal attractions, "by which Nature had interposed an everlasting bar to my success;" and on my performance of Beverley, in 'The Gamester,' with which the audience were deeply affected—several ladies, some in hysterics, being obliged to leave the boxes—he observed that it would have been altogether excellent, if not perfect, "but for the unaccommodating disposition of Nature in the formation of my face." I have no doubt I winced under the occasional lash of my Zoilus, for there is not in all creation a creature so sensitive as "the poor player." Is there not something to be said in palliation of his weakness? He leaves no trace of his life's work. The poet, as his imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, turns them to shape, which remains a lasting monument of his genius; the painter, upon the wall or canvas, fixes imperishably the dreams of his fancy; the sculptor, in the various attitudes of his life-like image, conveys to future times the thought and feeling that had burned within him; the player, with conceptions as glowing, heightening the poet's thought and realising his visions of glory, imprints his graceful and picturesque illustrations, his probing studies of the human heart, upon the light sands of time, impressions which the next wave obliterates. The more enduring arts leave in their works the champions of their fame to live and delight and instruct, when the cavils against them are heard no more. The player's triumph is momentary, passing as the rapturous applause that attests its merit dies away. "Feeble tradition is his memory's guard," and, with so brief and uncertain a hold upon the sympathies of his fellow-men, is it to be wondered at if he should be more keenly alive than others to the censures that may seem to endanger his popularity? In compliments, however, far and near, invitations, troops of friends, and all the flattering evidences of unanimous success, there were sufficient assurances of the position I had taken in public opinion to set me above the reach of harm from his strictures.

The report of what was passing at Bath was speedily carried to the London theatres, and my old and kind friend Mr. Fawcett, the stage manager of Covent Garden Theatre, was despatched by Mr. Harris to see me act and bring him the particular relation of my abilities, views, and pretensions. He was

present at my second performance of Orestes; and on his sounding me upon my expectations in regard to London, I stated my fixed intention not to make the hazard of an appearance there except upon a high salary and for a term of years, as the chances might be against me in the outset of my career, and if I could not regain lost ground I ought at least to indemnify myself pecuniarily for the advantages I should resign in the estimation I at present enjoyed. He had no objections to offer to my reasoning, and on his return to London I received proposals from Mr. Harris for an engagement of three years, not to be terminable at the manager's option (which was the customary form) at the end of the first. This correspondence was carried on for some weeks, during which I continued to win "golden opinions" in the characters of Hotspur, King Richard III., George Barnwell, Luke in 'Riches,' Alexander, &c. I was very warmly received in the characters of Orestes and Alexander at Bristol, and concluded my performances at Bath with the play of 'Riches,' repeated for my benefit to a crowded audience. The prosperous issue of this engagement was acknowledged very cordially by the managers, who fixed its payment on the terms I had asked, and entered into a contract with me for the next season for a longer period and at an increased rate of payment. To me the result of this visit to Bath was remunerative beyond its local influence. An engagement of 50*l.* per week for seven weeks was proposed to me by the Dublin management, and was of course accepted without hesitation. This, as an indication of extended reputation, and consequently of ample income, made me more independent of the London managers.

My father had, in writing to Fawcett on the subject of the Covent Garden negotiation with me, without my cognizance, suggested to them an experimental engagement for me of six or eight nights at £20 per night, my permanent establishment in the theatre to be determined by the degree of my success. At this proposition, which Fawcett doubted as being agreeable to me, they eagerly caught, and forthwith tendered it me, which I instantaneously and summarily declined; but on this, and other business, I went myself to London, and met there my father, who had gone to form engagements with Kean and Miss O'Neill. On the irrevocable step that he would have me

take, I could not be brought to concur with his opinions, and, declining the terms proposed by Covent Garden, trusted my fortunes for another year to the promise which the country theatres held out to me. My stay in London was limited to a few days, which I did not fail to turn to the best account. All the world was then under the attraction of the two theatrical magnets of the day, and it was not likely that I should be insensible to their influence. Places were taken one night at Drury Lane for 'Richard III.,' and for another Fawcett procured seats for us in the orchestra of Covent Garden, to see the Juliet of Miss O'Neill to the best advantage. Kean was engaged to sup with my father at the York Hotel after the performance of 'Richard,' to which I went with no ordinary feelings of curiosity. Cooke's representation of the part I had been present at several times, and it lived in my memory in all its sturdy vigour. I use this expression as applicable to him in the character which Cibber's clever stagey compilation has given to an English audience as Richard Plantagenet, in place of Shakespeare's creation—the earnest, active, versatile spirit, "impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer," who makes a business of his ambition, without let or demur clearing away or cutting down the obstacles to his progress, with not one pause of compunctious hesitation. There was a solidity of deportment and manner, and at the same time a sort of unctuous enjoyment of his successful craft, in the soliloquising stage villany of Cooke, which gave powerful and rich effect to the sneers and overbearing retorts of Cibber's hero, and certain points (as the peculiar mode of delivering a passage is technically phrased) traditional from Garrick were made with consummate skill, significance, and power.

Kean's conception was decidedly more Shakespearean. He hurried you along in his resolute course with a spirit that brooked no delay. In inflexibility of will and sudden grasp of expedients he suggested the idea of a feudal Napoleon. His personation was throughout consistent, and he was only inferior to Cooke where he attempted points upon the same ground as his distinguished predecessor. These points have often proved stumbling-blocks to actors and false lights to the discernment of audiences. The instances have not been rare in the Drama's history when the frequenters of theatres, on

the occasion of an actor's or an actress's first essay in any popular character, have reserved their judgments for the effect to be produced by one line or one speech, the particular point rendered famous by some preceding player; and the artist has as often been betrayed into laboured efforts to give prominence to such isolated passages, instead of relying on his penetration into the full depth of the poet's intention and the perfect comprehension of his one large and grand idea. "Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum."*

My father and self were betimes in our box. Pope was the lachrymose and rather tedious performer of Henry VI. But when the scene changed, and a little keenly-visaged man rapidly bustled across the stage, I felt there was meaning in the alertness of his manner and the quickness of his step. As the play proceeded I became more and more satisfied that there was a mind of no common order. In his angry complaining of Nature's injustice to his bodily imperfections, as he uttered the line, "To shrink my arm up like a withered shrub," he remained looking on the limb for some moments with a sort of bitter discontent, and then struck it back in angry disgust. My father, who sat behind me, touched me, and whispered, "It's very poor!" "Oh, no!" I replied, "it is no common thing," for I found myself stretching over the box to observe him. The scene with Lady Anne was entered on with evident confidence, and was well sustained, in the affected earnestness of penitence, to its successful close. In tempting Buckingham to the murder of the children, he did not impress me as Cooke was wont to do, in whom the sense of the crime was apparent in the gloomy hesitation with which he gave reluctant utterance to the deed of blood. Kean's manner was consistent with his conception, proposing their death as a political necessity, and sharply requiring it as a business to be done. The two actors were equally effective in their respective views of the unscrupulous tyrant; but leaving to Cooke the more prosaic version of Cibber, it would have been desirable to have seen the energy and restless activity of Kean giving life to racy language and scenes of direct and

"Let all begin, go on, and end consistently."

HORACE, *Art of Poetry.*

From which the preceding quotation is also taken, and in effect translated by Macready's context.—ED.

varied agency in the genuine tragedy with which his whole manner and appearance were so much more in harmony. In his studied mode of delivering the passages "Well! as you guess?" and "Off with his head! So much for Buckingham!" he could not approach the searching sarcastic incredulity, or the rich vindictive chuckle of Cooke; but in the bearing of the man throughout, as the intriguer, the tyrant, and the warrior, he seemed never to relax the ardour of his pursuit, presenting the life of the usurper as one unbroken whole, and closing it with a death picturesquely and poetically grand. Many of the Kemble school resisted conviction in his merits, but the fact that he made me feel was an argument to enrol me with the majority on the indisputable genius he displayed.

We retired to the hotel as soon as the curtain fell, and were soon joined by Kean, accompanied, or rather attended, by Pope. I need not say with what intense scrutiny I regarded him as we shook hands on our mutual introduction. The mild and modest expression of his Italian features, and his unassuming manner, which I might perhaps justly describe as partaking in some degree of shyness, took me by surprise, and I remarked with special interest the indifference with which he endured the fulsome flatteries of Pope. He was very sparing of words during, and for some time after, supper; but about one o'clock, when the glass had circulated pretty freely, he became animated, fluent, and communicative. His anecdotes were related with a lively sense of the ridiculous; in the melodies he sang there was a touching grace, and his powers of mimicry were most humorously or happily exerted in an admirable imitation of Braham; and in a story of Incledon acting Steady the Quaker at Rochester without any rehearsal,—where, in singing the favourite air, "When the lads of the village so merrily, oh!" he heard himself to his dismay and consternation accompanied by a single bassoon,—the music of his voice, his perplexity at each recurring sound of the bassoon, his under-tone maledictions on the self-satisfied musician, the peculiarity of his habits, all were hit off with a humour and an exactness that equalled the best display Mathews ever made, and almost convulsed us with laughter. It was a memorable evening, the first and last I ever spent in private with this extraordinary man.

In its outward graces how different was the excellence which, a night or two after, excited my enthusiastic admiration when Shakespeare's Juliet made her entry on the scene in the person of Miss O'Neill! Our seats in the orchestra of Covent Garden gave me the opportunity of noting every slightest flash of emotion or shade of thought that passed over her countenance. The charming picture she presented was one that time could not efface from the memory. It was not altogether the matchless beauty of form and face, but the spirit of perfect innocence and purity that seemed to glisten in her speaking eyes and breathe from her chiselled lips. To her might justly be ascribed the negative praise, in my mind the highest commendation that, as an artist, man or woman can receive, of a total absence of any approach to affectation. There was in her look, voice, and manner an artlessness, an apparent unconsciousness (so foreign to the generality of stage performers) that riveted the spectator's gaze; but when, with altered tones and eager glance, she inquired, as he lingeringly left her, the name of Romeo of the Nurse, and bade her go and learn it, the revolution in her whole being was evident, anticipating the worse,—

> ——"If he be married,
> My grave is like to be my wedding-bed."

I have heard objections to the warmth of her passionate confessions in the garden scene; but the love of the maid of sunny Italy is not to be measured and judged by the phlegmatic formalist.

> "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite,"

is her heart's utterance. Love was to her life; life not valued, if unsustained by love. Such was the impression Miss O'Neill's conception of the character made, rendering its catastrophe the only natural refuge of a guileless passion so irresistible and absorbing. In the second act the impatience of the love-sick maid to obtain tidings of her lover was delightfully contrasted with the winning playfulness with which she so dexterously lured back to doting fondness the pettish humour of the testy old

Nurse, and in rushing to her appointment at the Friar's cell, her whole soul was in the utterance of the words, "Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell." The desperate alternative to which the command of Capulet that she should marry Paris reduced her, transformed the gentle girl at once into a heroine, and the distracting contention of her fears and resolution rose to a frantic climax of passion, abruptly closed by her exclamation, "Romeo! I come! This do I drink to thee!" Through my whole experience hers was the only representation of Juliet I have seen, and as the curtain fell, I left my seat in the orchestra with the words of Iachimo in my mind, "All of her, that is out of door, most rich! . . . She is alone the Arabian bird."

CHAPTER VI.

1815.—Engagement at Glasgow—At Dublin—Humours and character of the Dublin audiences—Their peculiarities and attachment to old favourites—Bath—Profit to be made by an actor out of a bad house—Importance of study—Mentevole—Kitely—Pierre—Duke Aranza—The Twiss family—Offers from Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres—Meeting with brother at Weymouth—Officers at Bath—Mrs. Piozzi—Difficulties of the actor's art—Amateur actors—Performing with "Romeo Coates" at Bath—Leontes—Doricourt—Don Felix.

After one night's performance at Bristol I made my journey to Glasgow by way of Newcastle, where I spent a day or two with my family. At Glasgow I repeated my principal characters to good receipts; but with Kean's first engagement in Scotland announced over my head at greatly advanced prices, in which he was to be paid £100 per night, it was not to be expected that the young country actor should fare as well as if the field had been open. The produce of my engagement was however very satisfactory, putting a very handsome sum in my pocket. A trifling occurrence, to be remembered in after-life, fell out on the night of my benefit. A pretty little girl, about nine years of age, was sent on at a very short notice to act the part of one of the children in Dimond's pleasant farce, 'The Hunter of the Alps.' She was imperfect in the words she had to speak, having had no time to learn them; not being aware of this, I scolded her on coming off the stage for her neglect, which I was afterwards sorry for, as it cost her many tears. In later life this incident was recalled to me in a very unexpected manner.

From Glasgow my route to Dublin was by Port Patrick, the little haven of a dreary rock-bound coast, where I was detained in a miserable inn a whole day, wind-bound. The next morning

the master of the packet announced his intention to try the passage, though the wind was strong and almost ahead. The little vessel was "warped" out of the harbour, a boat having taken out a cable and fastened it to a buoy outside, up to which, with a windlass, we were hauled, the master observing to me, as the sail was being spread, "if that cable had given way, nothing could have saved us from being dashed to pieces on the rocks." By dint of many tacks we reached Donaghadee in a few hours, but on the passage I got into conversation with a young man of the name of Conroy, who informed me that he had reached Port Patrick by the same packet on his way to visit a friend in Glasgow College, that he had lost his luggage and his purse, and must now return to Dublin, as well as he could, to obtain a fresh supply. I offered him the assistance of my purse, and we proceeded together to Belfast, and thence to Dublin, I having accommodated him with linen and £6 odd in cash, which was to be repaid immediately. The linen was returned, but of cash and Conroy I never heard more. My Dublin engagement, in which I repeated several times my most favourite characters, that of Luke being the most popular, added to my reputation and materially improved my finances. 'Richard II.' was produced for my benefit, and as usual applauded, but did not attract. I made some agreeable acquaintances here, among whom I remember with peculiar pleasure the genial kind Joseph Atkinson, Moore's most intimate friend. At his house, with others of more note, I met the Dean of Ferns, who enjoyed the reputation of being the only man that could sit out through the whole night the Duke of Richmond, when Lord Lieutenant, over whisky-punch. From Lord Castlecoote I received much attention, and found a very warm friend in a humorous resemblance of Falstaff rejoicing in the name of Mick Doyle, who had been on the stage, and subsequently at the head of the Customs, from which he had retired with a good property and a good pension. It required some effort to preserve our grave looks when he used to lament over his condition. "There's poor old Mrs. Doyle! she's an excellent woman, a very good creature; but she's of no earthly use to me. If God Almighty would be good enough to take her to Himself, it would be much better for both of us."

The value of the principle that I had laid down as a primary

duty in my art, viz. *always to be in earnest*, was enforced upon me still more strongly by my experience before a Dublin audience. Their attention arrested and their feelings once excited, the actor enjoyed in their glowing sympathy the full triumph of his art. The national character might be read with tolerable correctness in their theatre. Keenly sensitive to the commanding truth of the poet's or the player's passion, they would as often find resource in their own humour from their dulness or inefficiency. It would not unfrequently happen that the humour of the gallery would prove the ruler of the hour, disturbing the more sedate of the spectators and utterly discomposing the player; until, checked by perhaps some energetic declamation or sobered by some touch of nature, they would surrender themselves to the potent influence of the scene, and beneath its charm no assembly could watch more intently, with more discriminating taste, or more lavish applause, "the dream of passion" passing before them. The anecdotes are numerous that have been current of the Dublin galleries' waggeries. I remember on one occasion acting the character of Pierre in 'Venice Preserved.' My friend Jaffier displayed a rotundity of person that might have agreed with the simile to which he likened himself, of a "full ear of corn," but certainly showed no appearance of being "withered in the ripening." As if in accordance with this obesity, his delivery was drawling and his deportment heavy. In the scene prepared for the execution of Pierre, after he had struck me and himself with his dagger, and gasping out the few spirited words of the defiant conspirator, I had closed my part with the cordial plaudits of the audience, a long and rather drowsy dying speech of my poor friend Jaffier was "dragging its slow length along," when one of the gallery, in a tone of great impatience, called out very loudly, "Ah! now, die at once;" to which another from the other side immediately replied, "Be quiet, you blackguard," then turned with a patronising tone to the lingering Jaffier, "Take your time!"

There was one peculiarity to which this audience clung, in Grattan's phrase, "with desperate fidelity." Their attachment to old stationary favourites was maintained with an ardour and persistency that repelled the interference of their better judgment; and from dates lost in the memory of play-

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goers, "old" Fullam, Williams, Johnson, and Talbot, four mediocre performers, held undisputed pre-eminence in their partial opinions above the best London comedians. Even Miss O'Neill did not displace Miss Walstein as their favourite tragic actress, though they allowed her the palm of superiority in comedy, the Irish Widow being considered as one of her most celebrated personations. Of course I speak of the notions that were rife at that time. From Dublin to Liverpool our passage in the sailing packet was a very good one, twenty-two hours, whence I hurried on to act in the race week at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where I was again at home and among old friends. Cheverille, in Holcroft's comedy of 'The Deserted Daughter,' and Shakespeare's King Henry V. were the only new characters I attempted there, but neither elicited any particular demonstration of approval, and indeed deserved none; for having barely mastered the text of each, all effect was left to chance, as I found by subsequent diligent study in making Henry one of my most popular assumptions.

My summer, spent in company with my sisters, was divided between professional engagements at Carlisle, Dumfries, and Berwick-upon-Tweed, and some holiday weeks in my old favourite retreat of Holy Island, from whence we made excursions to Bamborough Castle, Wark, Norham, &c., or frequently dined and drank tea among the rocks or sandy hills of the island under a little tent that I had constructed to supply the want of a bathing-house,—days of enjoyment that I have never ceased to reckon among the pleasures of the past. It was with regret I parted from them, but ill-blood made my leave-taking of my father much more to be sorrowed for. In matters of business he would take refuge in outbreaks of temper, and the issue would be an abrupt separation. As I review our differences I cannot honestly prefer excuses in his favour, but in making more allowances for him I should have been in all respects wiser; the more I had yielded, the more I should have had reason to have been satisfied with myself.

During a short engagement at Greenock, which added little to my stock, the tidings came of the victory of Waterloo, and several anxious days were passed before the published list of killed and wounded gave me assurance of my dear brother's safety. All the officers of his company had been put *hors de*

combat, either killed or severely wounded, but he, bringing the company out of action, gained his lieutenancy. Another short interval of relaxation at Holy Island and I was again *en route*, with engagements before me for some months to come. At Chester I was well received by respectable audiences, but at Sheffield, where my name was well known, my attraction was very great, and the four nights I acted there swelled the growth of my little purse considerably. These towns were taken on my road to Bath and Bristol, where I was to pass the greater part of the winter.

From circumstances that I do not remember, the season at Bath was a dull one, and the theatre suffered proportionately with the other places of amusement. But this did not prevent me from using as a means of study for my improvement the practice it afforded me. A full attendance is too generally required as a spur to a performer's exertions, and to a beggarly account of empty boxes many have been in the habit of slurring over (or what is known as "walking through") their parts. Indeed, I have been present when, on their benefit nights, performers have not only walked with contemptuous indifference through their parts, but have resented on the auditors present the absence of those who stayed away. It was a rule with me to make what profit I could out of a bad house, and before the most meagre audiences ever assembled it has been my invariable practice to strive my best, using the opportunity as a lesson; and I am conscious of having derived great benefit from the rule. I used to call it "acting to myself;" as indeed it was transferring the study of a character from my own apartment to the stage, where it was much less irksome; for in the solitude of a lodging to continue over and over again the repetition of passages with strict attention to one's elocution, deportment, gesture, and countenance, guarding against exaggeration, whilst lashing oneself up to the highest strain of passion, and this without any stimulus or any test beyond the individual's trust of having struck the chord aright, was a sort of darkling procedure, groping or feeling of one's way, that called upon me often for strong efforts of perseverance, being more trying to the constancy and patience of the student than falls to the lot of any other art: for in others the advances made are visible in the comparison of the works completed; but the player, by dint

of repeated efforts, must perfect himself in tones, attitudes, looks, of which he can only learn the effect under the nervous excitement of experimenting their power on the uncertain sympathies of an heterogeneous assembly.

More than once in my life I have heard, in dogmatic tone and with an oracular air, certain *soi-disant* critics bestowing on a player especial praise on the ground that his acting was quite natural, unpremeditated; that he did not require study, and that he never delivered the salient points of a character twice in the same way. What would reflection deduce from this, but that, although the artist may be subject more or less to the accidental variation of his animal spirits, yet, as there must be one form of expression which he finds nearest to the exact truth, in once attaining this, every deviation or declension from it must be more or less a deterioration? Study will bring ease, grace, and self-possession—the indispensable groundwork of the actor's art; but to evoke the various emotions that will give with fidelity nature's own expression to his look and voice—"hic labor, hoc opus est." As Talma used to say, "there was only *one best*"—to discover that is the labour of the artist; and having once achieved this, is it reconcilable to common sense that he would endanger his credit by tampering with the truth his patient investigation had wrought out? The approach to perfection is indeed usually so gradual, that, in one whose principle it would be to labour in his several performances to improve on what had gone before, whose motto to the very last words he utters on the scene is "Excelsior," the degrees of his toilsome ascent may be sometimes distinguishable, but beyond such shadowy variations his design and its treatment will remain unchanged.

Lord Hastings in Rowe's tragedy of 'Jane Shore,' and Leon in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of 'Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,' were new undertakings for me. In the proud and gallant courtier, Hastings, I was much applauded; on Leon I had not bestowed sufficient thought and pains for the insurance of success. But a character which far more than either of these laid hold on my fancy, was given to me by Dimond. Unfortunately the play was one which the greatest adept in the histrionic art could never have rendered popular. Its title was 'Julia, or the Italian Lover;' the author's name

Jephson. Kemble had appeared in it, with Mrs. Siddons as the heroine; had been praised, and the performance forgotten. The story opens and sets in unbroken gloom; no ray of hope once glances on its languid progress, leading to a catastrophe which the spectator has from the first anticipated. Claudio, the betrothed lover of Julia, had perished by the hand of an unknown assassin, and since his death Mentevole has been her devoted though unsuccessful suitor. In this character, in his absorbing passion and his irrepressible restlessness of demeanour betraying a mind ill at ease, the interest of the tragedy centres. The incidents are few and meagre until the last act, when his guilt as the murderer of Claudio is brought to light. In this scene, in the assassin's agitated endeavours to disprove the charge and his subsequent desperate avowal of the deed, there is great scope for the actor's art. A very powerful impression was produced by it. In its performance, in the actual scene, I remember well the image of a prisoner on trial at Carlisle vainly attempting to preserve his composure under the consciousness of guilt flashed back upon me, and greatly aided me in giving reality to the emotion of the agonized Mentevole. The language of the play does not redeem the unfortunate dulness of the plot: never rising to the poetical, in its more ambitious strain, its cumbrous verse is often inflated and exaggerated. In point of composition its best passage is the expostulation of Mentevole with Julia, in the fourth act:

> "Oh, thou unthankful beauty! think a little,
> How envied, but for thee, had been my lot.
> My youth had glided down life's easy stream
> With every sail outspread for every pleasure.
> But from the hour I saw thy fatal charms
> My bosom has been Hell. How I have loved,
> All my neglected duties of the world—
> Friends, parents, interest, country—all forgotten—
> Cry out against me; now I count the exchange,
> And find all bartered for thy hate and scorn!"

But with its many faults the 'Italian Lover' rendered me good service in obtaining for me very high praise in its principal character. The performance of Benedict in Shakespeare's 'Much Ado about Nothing' won me friends, among others the family of Francis Twiss, who had married the loveliest of Mrs.

Siddons' sisters. Horace Twiss called on me at his mother's desire, and it was to that performance of Benedict I was indebted for an intimacy with friends whose attachment to me lasted through their lives, and whose memory I hold in ever grateful regard.

Ben Jonson's comedy of 'Every Man in his Humour' was revived; but for the part of Kitely, one of the most difficult out of Shakespeare on the stage, and which in after years I made one of my ablest personations, sufficient time was not allowed, nor had I then experience for the mastery of so eccentric a character. With humours admirably sketched and most happily contrasted, the play will never hold its place on the stage. There can scarcely be found a company of players to adequately fill the various parts; and if there were by chance such combination, their best efforts could not long give life to a drama that is totally devoid of action. Pierre in 'Venice Preserved,' and the Duke Aranza in Tobin's 'Honeymoon,' were additional steps for me in public favour.

At this time Drury Lane Theatre was under the management of a sub-committee of five members, which included Lord Byron, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, and the Hon. George Lambe. From the latter I received a letter in very courteous terms inquiring whether I was disposed to take an engagement at Drury Lane. A long correspondence followed; but when we approached the subject of terms and I stated the tender from Covent Garden which I had refused the year before, Mr. Kinnaird wrote declining on the part of the committee to make any offer. This seemed to me abrupt, if not unhandsome, to amuse me so long with a negotiation that meant nothing, and I accordingly intimated as much to Mr. Lambe, observing that I was justified in expecting some proposal, however moderate it might be. He replied in a most gentlemanly strain, apologizing for all the trouble he had given me, and admitting that the finances of Drury Lane not enabling the committee to compete with Covent Garden in the salaries of new performers, they had considered it better to close the negotiation, than to tender what they were aware I could not accept. It was the earnest wish of my friends at Rugby to see me in London, and they could not understand the Fabian policy under which I acted in delaying my appearance there. All the interest they

could bring to bear (unknown to me) was exerted to incline the Drury Lane Committee to introduce me to a London audience, but they, the committee, were for cheap ventures, and my price was too high. My friend and tutor, Birch, had applied to the Rev. J. Noel, an old college chum of his and a relation of Lady Byron, to use his influence with Lord Byron in the matter; and in reporting to me some years afterwards the issue of his intervention, he laughed heartily at the characteristic conclusion to which the great poet came on the subject. Noel had been instructed to expatiate on my professional qualifications and successes, and added (I know not whether from himself or his prompters), "And, besides all this, Mr. Macready is a very moral man." "Ha! then," replied Byron, "I suppose he asks five pounds a week more for his morality." The enterprise and liberal speculation of the Covent Garden proprietors showed in striking contrast with the timid economy of the Drury Lane management. A letter from Fawcett at this very time, re-opening our negotiation in very cordial terms, observes to me that "Kean seems likely to be more in your way at Drury Lane than Young would be at Covent Garden. All your best parts you might act with us and not trespass upon anybody. Come to us next year—for one year, two years, three years, or for life. The article shall be made as you please, only don't be exorbitant." This frank and business-like invitation was the commencement of a renewed correspondence with the Covent Garden management.

About the same time I was unexpectedly hailed from Portland Roads, where several transports conveying to Ireland troops that had formed part of the army of occupation round Paris were lying at anchor. A few hasty lines from my brother informed me that they were impatiently waiting there for a change of wind to carry them to Cork, and that being unable to leave his ship, he sent, finding himself so near me, a word or two of greeting. Not being required at the theatre for three or four successive nights, my anxiety to see him after two years' absence, in which he had been exposed to dangers and vicissitudes, overcame all prudential scruples; and, for the chance of finding him still in harbour, I set off in the evening by the mail to Salisbury, from which I posted on through the

night, and dressing and breakfasting at Dorchester, reached Weymouth about nine o'clock. To my great joy I learned that the *Bideford* and the other transports were still in the Roads, and a good pair of oars soon brought me alongside of the ship, the deck of which was crowded with soldiers in various stages of the morning's toilet. I inquired for Lieutenant Macready, and hearing he was in the cabin, with a quickly beating heart I descended the narrow steps, as one of the officers called out, "Jack, you are wanted." Several were in the close little stifling place, but there among them was he in his shirt-sleeves, little altered from the boy I had parted with two years ago. He met me with an unexpected exclamation of "Ah! d—n it, Will, how are you?" I told him I had a boat waiting, and on his obtaining leave he returned to Weymouth with me. How different in after years was his grave, reserved, and gentlemanly address! Our few hours were passed in mutual relation of the events that had befallen us; and, as three more of the regiment had come on shore in the course of the day, to prolong our *tête-à-tête* we dined together at the Royal Hotel on the Esplanade—a dinner which, from the impudent extravagance of its charge, would cause me to remember Weymouth, if all else were to be forgotten. In a dull dingy room, looking out on the back of the premises, with ordinary table service, for a haddock, leg of Portland mutton, apple tart, bottle of Madeira (charged 8*s*.), bottle of port (6*s*.), a bill was presented to me of £2 16*s*. We supped at a more moderate inn with the other men of the 30th (all since gone, not one Waterloo man left in the regiment), and the next morning, taking leave of Edward, who was to write to me on his arrival with the regiment at Buttevant, I set out on my return to Bath.

Little more than a week had elapsed after my arrival there, when early one morning, to my perfect amazement, Edward walked into my bedroom in the deshabille which he wore on board the transport. His explanation was soon given. The ship had been driven back by contrary winds to Portsmouth, where several of the officers had gone on shore to lounge about the place; he, with an ensign of the name of Gregg, had not been apprised of the signal for sail, and had been left in the town without cash or clothes of a presentable

appearance. The landlord of the hotel advanced them money for their journey to Bath, for which, with the amount of their bills, my brother gave a written undertaking. From the superfluity of my wardrobe, with my tailor's assistance, he was readily equipped, but how to manage for his friend was a more difficult question. They had brought away a very handsome shako, just sent down to the regiment, and we persuaded Gregg to mount my Captain Plume's jacket, a fancy uniform, over which he put his own braided surcoat, and, with Edward's gay shako, went out in the afternoon to parade with the fashionable throng of Milsom Street, not being aware that a military dress was never seen in the streets of Bath. It seems he almost immediately encountered two general officers, who stared with looks of manifest displeasure on the extraordinary phenomenon; and to complete his vexation, some subalterns whom he knew sent him back to my lodgings to unfrock himself in a state of extreme perturbation. My brother and his companion were obliged to wait the sailing of the Bristol packet to Cork. In the meantime I enabled Edward to discharge his dues to his Portsmouth landlord, and furnishing him with funds for their passage, &c., I took leave of them at Bristol after my performance of Kitely, and had the satisfaction in a few days of hearing that, by fortune of a very favourable gale, they had reached their regiment just in time to announce their arrival to the Colonel on the 24th.

Among other memorable acquaintances that my good fortune gave me in this pleasant city was Dr. Gibbs, the leading physician of the place, afterwards knighted by the Regent for his attendance on Queen Charlotte. He had been a college chum of my cousin, Walter Birch, who still retained his fellowship of Magdalen, and who at my first introduction to Gibbs dined with me at his house. The party was select and very agreeable, but rendered especially interesting by the announcement in the evening of "Mrs. Piozzi." It seemed almost as if a portrait by Sir Joshua had stepped out of its frame, when the little old lady, dressed *point de vice* in black satin, with dark glossy ringlets under her neat black hat, highly rouged, not the end of a ribbon or lace out of its place, with an unfaltering step entered the room. And was this really "the Mrs. Thrale," the sage monitress of 'The Three Warn-

ings,' the indefatigable tea-maker of the Great Insatiable? She was instantly the centre on which every eye was fixed, engrossing the attention of all. I had the satisfaction of a particular introduction to her, and was surprised and delighted with her vivacity and good-humour. The request that she would read to us from Milton was very readily complied with, and I was given to understand she piqued herself on her superiority in giving effect to the great poet's verse. She selected a passage from the eleventh book of 'Paradise Lost,' descriptive of the lazar-house, enunciating with studied and elaborate distinctness each of the enumerated physical ills "that flesh is heir to." The finger on the dial-plate of the *pendule* was just approaching the hour of ten, when with a kind of Cinderella-like abruptness she rose and took her leave, evidently as much gratified in contributing to our entertainment as we were by the opportunity of making her acquaintance. Dr. Gibbs informed us that she never under any circumstances overstepped by a single minute the hour of ten in returning home.

It was my lot some days later to meet her again at my friends, the Twisses; but here there were not more than five or six elderly persons, and a bevy of young girls, most or all of them with strong theatrical inclinings. The consequence was, that after a brief conversation with the lively little lioness, the younger people clustered together at the further end of the drawing-room, listening to stories, or in talk over plays, that descended from Shakespeare to the 'Italian Lover;' when, all at once, long before her accustomed hour, Mrs. Piozzi started up, and coldly wishing Mr. and Mrs. Twiss good night, left the room. Inquiring looks passed in silence and surprise from one to another, and in an undertone our hostess observed, "She is very much displeased." I then learned that, accustomed and expecting to be the attraction of the evening wherever she might be invited, she could never conceal her chagrin if disappointed in receiving the homage of the circle she might be in. Here was the ruling passion cherished to a degree of weakness that excited compassion for one so stricken in years, to whom unhappily they had not proved the "years that bring the philosophic mind." In recalling to my memory this gifted woman, the association of her

name with that of poor Conway forces itself on my recollection. His admiration of her talents awakened in her a lively interest for him, and cemented a friendship between them, which was variously canvassed by the many. One fact, however, is to be remembered to his honour. His circumstances were much straitened. A few days before her death she sent him a cheque on her bankers for £500, which on her decease he inclosed to her heir and administrator, from whom he received a cold and bare acknowledgment.

One of the disadvantages incident to the pursuit of the theatrical art is the supposed facility of its attainment, nor is it less cheapened in public estimation by the general assumption of the ability to criticise it. How frequent, to questions of opinion on other arts, are the evasive answers, "I am no judge of poetry;" "I have never studied pictures;" "I do not know much about sculpture." Yet the person confessedly ignorant on these subjects, would be at no fault in pronouncing a decisive judgment on

> "The youngest of the sister Arts,
> Where all their beauty blends!"

It is Addison who describes "a picture" as "a poem without words." In illustrating the poet's thought, the actor presents in harmonious succession a series of living pictures, in which his intellectual acuteness often throws light on what might otherwise be obscure, whilst his fervid sensibility compels sympathy with the passion he portrays. But Campbell's beautiful lines condense all that more diffuse prose would seek to express on that theme:

> "For ill can Poetry express
> Full many a tone of thought sublime;
> And Painting, mute and motionless,
> Steals but a glance of time.
> But by the mighty actor brought,
> Illusion's perfect triumphs come;
> Verse ceases to be airy thought,
> And sculpture to be dumb."

It surely needs something like an education for such an art, and yet that appearance of mere volition and perfect ease, which costs the accomplished artist so much time and toil

to acquire, evidently leads to a different conclusion with many, or amateur acting would be less in vogue. Among those I have seen, the only amateurs with any pretension to theatrical talent were Charles Dickens, of world-wide fame, and the lovely representative of Mary Copp in the 'Merry Monarch' at the British Embassy at Paris, Miss MacTavish, the niece of Lady Wellesley, afterwards married to the Hon. H. Howard, and since dead. One of the very worst, if not the worst, who owed his notoriety chiefly to his frequent exposure of himself in the character of Romeo, Lothario, Belcour, &c., was Coates, more generally known as "Romeo Coates." He drove a curricle with large gilt cocks emblazoning his harness, and on the stage wore diamond buttons on his coat and waistcoat. He displayed himself, diamonds and all, this winter at Bath in the part of the West Indian, and it was currently believed on this occasion he was liberally paid by the theatre, which profited largely by his preposterous caricature. I was at the theatre on the morning of his rehearsal and introduced to him. At night the house was too crowded to afford me a place in front; and seeing me behind the scenes, he asked me, knowing I acted Belcour, to prompt him, if he should be "out," which he very much feared. The audience were in convulsions at his absurdities, and in the scene with Miss Rusport, being really "out," I gave him a line which Belcour has to speak, "I never looked so like a fool in all my life;" which, as he delivered it, was greeted with a roar of laughter. He was "out" again, and I gave him again the same line, which, again repeated, was acquiesced in with a louder roar. Being "out" again, I administered him the third time the same truth for him to utter, but he seemed alive to its application, rejoining in some dudgeon, "I have said that twice already." His exhibition was a complete burlesque of the comedy, and a reflection on the character of a management that could profit by such discreditable expedients.

The success of my last year's engagement in Dublin induced the manager there to propose some terms for a longer period, thirteen weeks, which I could not expect to be on the same footing as before, but which were to amount to not less than £20 per week, a remuneration that I considered very liberal. But before my departure from Bath

I had several of my characters to repeat, among which were Doricourt, and Don Felix in the 'Wonder.' Mrs. Alsop, the daughter of Mrs. Jordan, acted Letitia Hardy and Violante: some tones of her voice recalled for an instant her incomparable mother, but there all resemblance ended. The theatre was not so fashionable this winter as the previous one, but that did not cause me to relax in my exertions, and indeed I was sensible of considerable improvement. My performance of Romeo was an advance on that of last year, and was riveted in my memory by a little poetical tribute published in the *Bath Herald*, the grace and feeling of which will justify its insertion here:

"When Romeo's anguish speaking in thine eye
Prompts the deep shudder and the aching sigh;
When the rich sweetness of thy melting tone
Thrills the full heart, and makes thy woes our own;
When Passion's wild convulsions shake thy frame
(The expression varying, but the grace the same),
Can those, by Truth and Nature taught to feel,
Wake the loud plaudit's wildly echoing peal?
Can they repress the luxury of woe,
Or check in shouts the tear's impetuous flow?
No; to such souls thy magic powers impart
The deep emotions of a breaking heart:
When Love retains awhile the fleeting breath,
And Passion struggles with the pangs of Death,
When mortal weakness strives in vain to tell
The grief and fondness of a last farewell,
The praise of art by Man's applause be shown,
While gentler Woman gives thee tears alone."

My benefits at Bath and Bristol closed my engagements in those theatres. At Bath I acted for the first time Leontes in the 'Winter's Tale,' in which character I produced in later years a very strong impression. My days had been very agreeably passed in these Bath engagements, for most of my idle ones were days of pleasure, to which the residence of my old friend and master Dr. Wooll, who came to spend his Christmas holidays here, did not a little contribute. He was widely known and none more frequently "on hospitable thoughts intent" than himself. The principal proprietor of the theatre was Mr. Palmer, the originator of the mail-coach service, by whom the entire system of the Post Office had been revolutionized and the delivery of letters wonderfully

accelerated. If I do not mistake he sat for Bath in Parliament several sessions, and was succeeded in the representation of the city by his son, General Palmer. He expressed the wish to make my acquaintance, and on visiting him I was received with great kindness. His manners were courtly and engaging, and, as a playgoer in Garrick's time, his confident predictions of my future success were to me something more than mere idle compliment. Lord Gwydir was another acquaintance whose stately though affected address might probably have escaped my memory, but for a defence against cold recommended to me by him, to which through my long life I have been constantly indebted, and by which under east winds or in cold weather I never fail even now to protect myself. This is simply two or three sheets of paper across the chest buttoned under the waistcoat, forming a cuirass, impenetrable by Boreas, Eurus, or any of the malignant gales that drive cough and too often consumption into the lungs of the unwary. This simple breastplate will on the coldest day, without extra upper clothing, diffuse, under exercise, warmth through the whole frame, and has proved to me one of the most valuable recipes.

CHAPTER VII.

1816.—Garrick Jubilee at Hereford—Dublin—Farewell performance of John Kemble, in Othello, on the Dublin stage—Lord Townley—London engagement at Covent Garden made for five years—Mr. Plunkett in Richard III. —Performing at Wexford and Galway—Tour in North Wales—Snowdon —Meeting with brother at Liverpool.

To Dublin, where was my next engagement, my route, in compliance with the earnest prayer of Mr. Crisp, the manager of the theatre, was made through Hereford. He had got up a local excitement upon what he called a "Garrick Jubilee," being a public dinner at the principal hotel, and in the evening a performance at the theatre in honour of the day, the hundredth anniversary of the great actor's birth. David Garrick was born on the 20th of February, 1716, at the Angel Inn in Hereford. The theatrical portion of the celebration consisted of the representation of the 'Wonder,' the play in which Garrick took leave of the stage, the recitation of Sheridan's monody on his death, and Garrick's farce of 'The Lying Valet.' I heard none of the speeches at the dinner, rising with the removal of the cloth, in order to prepare for my performance of Don Felix. My long experience of the stage has convinced me of the necessity of keeping, on the day of exhibition, the mind as intent as possible on the subject of the actor's portraiture, even to the very moment of his entrance on the scene. He meditates himself, as it were, into the very thought and feeling of the being he is about to represent: enwrapt in the idea of the personage he assumes, he moves, and looks, and bears himself as the Roman or the Dane, and thus almost identifies himself with the creature of his imagination. It is not difficult to produce individual effects *ad libitum*, which will of course have their full estimation with the run

of audiences; but I cannot conceive the representation of character without this preliminary preparation, or some such mental process. The theatre was crowded, the play much applauded; the manager's pockets were filled, and his Jubilee was a success. He was much obliged to me, and the next morning I was on my road to Dublin.

I reached my destination some days before my engagement began, and without delay settled myself in comfortable quarters in Suffolk Street, where I had a spacious drawing-room and good bed-room at a moderate rent; being "done for," in lodging-house phraseology, by my landlady, Mrs. Rock. My early arrival enabled me to be a witness of the farewell performance of John Philip Kemble on the Dublin stage; an opportunity I could not be expected to neglect. It may indeed be readily supposed that I went to find a seat in the theatre on that evening under the agitation of no common curiosity. The audience was not what I had anticipated on the occasion. In theatrical parlance, it was what would be termed "respectable," but not numerous. The house was about half filled, and I obtained a very convenient place in the first circle of boxes. I should with difficulty have believed, if told, that such would be the case on the announcement of the last appearance "previous to his final retirement" of so distinguished an actor; but here was an instance of the caprice of public favour. In former visits to Dublin Kemble had been greatly followed. In this engagement, his last, the theatre was indifferently attended. The popularity of Kean, who had in the preceding summer acted for several weeks to overflowing houses, may have served to have exhausted enthusiasm and to have cast into shade the past glories of Kemble's triumphs here, exemplifying the truth of Shakespeare's lines:

> "For time is like a fashionable host,
> That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand;
> And with his arms outstretched, as he would fly,
> Grasps in the comer."

Whatever the cause, the fact is as I record it. An apathy pervaded the playgoing world and the manager's calculations were disappointed, and, in the hope of rousing the public from the torpor that appeared to possess them, Kemble had consented to reappear in characters which he had long since

relinquished and which were among the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Kean. From the time of Cooke's acknowledged supremacy in 'Richard the Third,' Kemble had given up the part: in now resuming it, he had only provoked unwilling and humiliating comparisons; and in selecting for his benefit and last performance the character of Othello, which had never ranked among his more finished efforts, he again placed himself at disadvantage with Kean, whose "fiery quality" in his splendid personation of the Moor was fresh in the memories of all. Like a diligent scholar, I took my place early, not to lose one look or word of this important lesson. Iago, Brabantio, and Roderigo followed the traditional directions through the opening scene, and when it changed, the majestic figure of John Kemble in Moorish costume "with a slow and stately step" advanced from the side wing. A more august presence could scarcely be imagined. His darkened complexion detracted but little from the stern beauty of his commanding features, and the enfolding drapery of his Moorish mantle hung gracefully on his erect and noble form.* The silent picture he presented compelled admiration. The spectators applauded loudly and heartily, but the slight bow with which he acknowledged the compliment spoke rather dissatisfaction at the occasional vacant spaces before him than recognition of the respectful feeling manifested by those present. I must suppose he was out of humour, for, to my exceeding regret, he literally walked through the play.

My attention was riveted upon him through the night in hope of some start of energy, some burst of passion, lighting up the dreary dulness of his cold recitation, but all was one gloomy unbroken level—actually not better than a school repetition. In the line "Not a jot! not a jot!" there was a tearful tremor upon his voice that had pathos in it: with that one exception not a single passage was uttered that excited the audience to sympathy, or that gave evidence of artistic power. His voice was monotonously husky, and every word was enunciated with laboured distinctness. His readings were faultless; but there was no spark of feeling, that could enable us to get a glimpse of the "constant, loving, noble nature" of Othello, of him who,

> "Perplexed in the extreme, ...
> Dropt tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> Their medicinal gum."

The play went through without one round of applause. There was not "the noble Moor, whom the full senate called all in all sufficient," but John Kemble, apparently with stoical indifference, repeating the correct text of "the words that burn:" of that passion, of that sublime conception, there was no spark of feeling. The curtain fell in silence, and I left the theatre with the conviction that I had not yet seen Kemble, and that I must look forward to other opportunities to form a judgment of his powers. I heard afterwards that his health had suffered during his stay in Dublin, which may in part account for his falling so much beneath himself.

My long engagement here was ushered in with the character which had made so successful an impression at Bath and Bristol, Mentevole, in the 'Italian Lover,' which elicited applause, but did not draw houses. My days were occupied with study, and by a very ascetic regimen my care was "to increase my store," a duty to which I had not been heretofore sufficiently attentive. The only part I added to my list was that of Lord Townley in 'The Provoked Husband,' which I have no doubt was a very crude essay, but one on which I very much improved in later years. The list of my plays was, however, diversified by the production of an original comedy called 'Changes and Chances,' writen by a retired officer of the name of MacNeil; in which I acted the part of Edward Gregory, a young castaway. The piece was not without merit, and, supported by the author's friends, was acted several nights to good houses, but was declined by the London managers, with whom I used what interest I had for its acceptance. My negotiation with them for a given number of years at Covent Garden had been resumed, and was now in regular train. Well do I remember the fretful uneasiness and misgiving with which I received and replied to each letter. A London engagement, the crowning object of every player's ambition, was to me, in its uncertain issue, a trial that I shrank from, and which I would certainly have deferred if by opportunity of practice elsewhere, for instance at Edinburgh, Liverpool, Norwich, York, &c., I could have maintained my income and have further matured my powers. The hazard was great. The cast must be a decisive one: one on which my life's future must depend, and in which the great talents of those already in secure possession of the public favour seemed to

leave me little room for success. But no alternative presented itself: the irrevocable step must needs be taken; and all that remained was to fortify myself against adverse chances as best I could, by identifying to the utmost possible extent the proprietor's interests with my own. In reply therefore to Mr. Fawcett's overture, I required a contract for five years at the rate of £16 per week for two years, £17 for two years, and £18 for one year, which was immediately acceded to by Mr. Harris. The correspondence was, however, prolonged by stipulations I desired to make in reference to my veto on characters I might consider derogatory; but the arguments of the Covent Garden managers satisfied me of the unreasonableness of such clauses. The agreement was concluded, and I was pledged to appear at Covent Garden the following September.

Before I left Dublin an announcement appeared in the playbills of "Shakespeare's Historical Play of 'King Richard III.' The Duke of Gloster, by Mr. Plunkett, of this city, who comes before the public for the purpose of giving him a claim at a future period for a benefit in order to relieve the distressed poor of Dublin and its vicinity." The city was all alive with the promise of "fun" which this notification held out. Mr. Plunkett was a gentleman, a barrister of the Four Courts without practice, and nearly related to Lord Fingall; but was said to have —what the Scotch call—"a bee in his bonnet." Unlike his vulgar contemporary Coates, his motives were disinterested and amiable, and his sacrifices in behalf of charity would have been without parallel could he but have known how superlatively ludicrous were his efforts in its cause. The audience that crowded the theatre were in fits of laughter from the beginning to the end, the wags in pit and gallery taking part in the dialogue. When he said in Gloster's soliloquy, "Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile," the response from the pit was, "Oh! by the powers, you can!" To his question, "Am I then a man to be beloved?" voices answered, "Indeed, then, you are not!" At "Off with his head!" the encore was long continued, and at the death the shouts of laughter and ironical "bravos" drowned the remainder of the tragedy; but so satisfied was he of his triumphant success, that the next morning he called on the Lord Chief Justice Bushe to learn his opinion, and understanding that he had been unable to visit

the theatre, Plunkett begged leave to act some of Richard's speeches before him, which, to the great annoyance of the Chief Justice, who feared the gathering of a mob about the windows, he did, and pressed the venerable judge for his verdict. The Chief Justice had no escape but in assuring him that "he had never seen anything like it in all the performances he had ever witnessed;" which sentence, as that of the Chief Justice, Plunkett sent to the papers the next day. He was too estimable and kind-hearted a man not to excite regret in many that he should have been under such a delusion in respect to his theatrical powers.

My correspondence with my brother, who was then with his regiment at Limerick, had been very regular, and learning from it that the allowance he had expected from my father was discontinued, I was able from my savings to remit him the amount of the balance against him at his agent's, and what was requisite for his journey home; whither, after staying a few days with me in Dublin, he proceeded to spend the term of his leave of absence. The play of 'Pizarro,' selected for my benefit, in which I acted Rolla, wound up my engagement, and, putting me in cash, gave me the means of discharging the arrest of an uncle—one of those that, in the Irish description of character, "would break into prison." I might as well have saved the money, as he was soon again in a similar plight, and made me a very scurvy return for my respect to our consanguinity.

The interval between the end of June and the beginning of September was not without its labours and its anxiety. But the latter, in its pressure on my spirits, overweighed by far the effect of any active duty, from the difficulty that arose in deciding on the play that was to determine my fate before a London public. The letters that passed resulted in no conclusion. The Covent Garden managers were under apprehension of organised opposition to any one appearing in Kean's characters, which disposed at once of Luke, my first suggestion; Belcour, to which I was partial, was objected to on other grounds; and the ultimate resource appeared to be Orestes, although with two heroines, Hermione and Andromache, in the tragedy, there was no actress in the theatre equal to one—Miss O'Neill's return not being expected till later in the season. But the final decision was reserved until

the subject could be discussed in a personal conference. In the meantime two engagements at Wexford and Galway were of service to me in the way of practice and profit, though the company with which I acted in those towns, under the management of Mr. Clarke, was one that would, I regret to say, have justified the severities of Churchill and of Crabbe. To meet the scanty resources of the troop it was necessary to prepare myself in Octavian in Colman's play of 'The Mountaineers,' and in Bertram in Maturin's tragedy of that name, neither of which characters remained very long upon my list. But my mind was engrossed with the eventful trial to which every day brought me nearer, and, leaving Galway in the latter part of August, I sought to enjoy in the diversion of my thoughts a few days of tranquillising relaxation amongst the romantic and beautiful scenery of North Wales.

It was a rest to the wearing and depressing musings, from which I could not otherwise have escaped, to wander alone among the ruins of Conway Castle, or along the river banks by the lovely village of Llanrwst, to linger by the tumbling waters of the Llugwy and coast the southern side of Snowdon, which, as the Cambrian Parnassus, I had a kind of superstitious longing to look upon. My first view of the mountain was under circumstances so peculiar as to impress them through afterlife upon the memory. My route lay through Capel Curig to Beddgelert. The day was most unpropitious to the tourist, a heavy white mist enveloping the landscape, and completely overlying the prospect beyond a few yards from the wheel-tracks. My disappointment amounted to vexation, and after vainly straining my eyes to discover anything through the impenetrable fog, I lay back in the chaise chafing at the mischance that baffled the main purpose of my morning's ride; but as I lay vacantly gazing on the blank mist that surrounded me, I was startled by the appearance of what seemed two dark pyramidical masses almost over my head, looking like two Laputas floating in the sky. I called out abruptly to the postilion, pointing to the strange phenomenon, with the inquiry, "What are those objects?" His answer was quick and short, "Snowdon, sir;" and to my surprise and delight there indeed were the two distinct peaks of that noble mountain, rising out of the sea of clouds, and towering

above them into the sunlight, recalling the picture of Goldsmith's cliffs:—

> "Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Finding on reaching Beddgelert that my time would not serve me to ascend the mountain, I pressed on to Caernarvon, where of course every nook and corner of the magnificent castle was peered into. My after-dinner's walk was to the site of the Roman city Segontium, and on my way I was greatly delighted to come upon a small Druidical circle within an enclosure on one side of the road. My ramble detained me long; and calling at the post-office on my return, I found a letter from my brother, dated Carlisle, informing me that he should be at Liverpool the next day, on his way to join his regiment at Limerick. There was no time for hesitation; it might be very long before the chance of meeting would again present itself, and in my present state of mind, with a perilous hazard before me, it would be a solace to my spirits to pass a few hours with one so bound in affection to me. I directly ordered a chaise and pair, and set out by way of Bangor and Conway, through Chester, to Woodside Ferry, which, by travelling all night, I reached in good time the next morning. A very comfortable inn, the Ferry House, furnished me with all the means of refreshment, and a pleasant breeze carried me very quickly across the river to Liverpool. The 'Liverpool Arms' in Castle-Street was then the principal hotel, now remembered, I dare say, by few. Having engaged rooms there, I sent round to every inn in the town, and called myself at several, inquiring for Lieutenant Macready. Nothing could be heard of such a person, and I was forced to conclude that he had sailed in the Dublin packet the evening before.

With no acquaintance near me, having neither occupation nor amusement, I went in the evening to the theatre, for the chance of what might be acted. Even from an inferior stage there may be "much matter to be heard and learned" by a thoughtful observer. The opera or melodrama of 'Guy Mannering' was played there for the first time, Emery appearing in, and realising, the character of Dandie Dinmont. I had not then read the novel, and the story, as put upon the stage, is not

one of the clearest. It was therefore in rather a listless and indifferent mood I watched its progress, dividing my attention between the actors and the audience, when, to my surprise and great delight, three or four boxes off I saw my brother. I did not wait for the box-keeper's key, but, somewhat indecorously I must confess, clambered over the intervening partitions to shake hands with him, which I did in a tumult of joy that attracted more observation than I desired. We sat out the piece together, to which however the mutual information we had to give allowed us to pay little attention. He spent a couple of days with me at the hotel, long after remembered as very pleasant ones, in the enjoyment of which the uneasy thoughts that had of late beset me on the uncertainty of the fate in store for me had been shut out from my mind; but on parting with him I relapsed into my doubtful musings. He sailed in the evening packet for Dublin, and the next morning I took the coach for London.

CHAPTER VIII.

1816.—Risks and advantages of a London engagement—First appearance at Covent Garden as Orestes, 16th September, 1816—Contemporary criticism —Times—Globe—Hazlitt—Remarks on personal appearance—Mentevole—Othello—Iago—Position and prospect on the London stage.

IT would be supposed that to a provincial player the prospect of a metropolitan engagement should be rather a cause of exultation than depression; and with most no doubt it would. To the generality, with little or nothing to lose even in failure, success would bring, in respect to salary and social position, desirable and important changes. In such a hazard there is no drawback: nothing to disturb or chill the hopeful spirit that impels the young enthusiast. All is on the side of daring. To him the enterprise presents but two points, as in "the adventure of the diver: one when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge; one when, a prince, he rises with his pearl!" But to me the country thetares had already yielded an income exceeding that on which I was to tempt my fortune in London, with professional reputation pretty widely extended. In aiming therefore at a doubtful triumph I seemed to jeopard advantages already secured—preparing for the eventful struggle in a field where all the vantage-ground was already and strongly occupied. Still the decision was not rashly made, nor without balancing the reasons on either side. Most of the respectable country managers would recognise as "auxiliaries" or "stars" (the green-room title given to occasional professional visitors like myself) those actors only who had the London stamp; and this exclusive rule so limited my sphere of action that, both in respect to income and practice, I must by remaining in the country have sunk considerably below my previous average.

The plunge must therefore be taken, and under that necessity my mind was made up, whatever might befal, to do my very best, though unable to overcome my diffidence of the result as I reviewed the difficulties of my position.

Arrived in London, and temporarily quartered at my former hotel, the old Slaughter Coffee House, I lost no time in presenting myself to the Covent Garden managers. Mr. Henry Harris, Reynolds, the dramatic author, reader, and adviser, and Fawcett formed "the cabinet" of the theatre, and I was made a party to their consultations on the still perplexing subject of my opening play. They had a heavy stake in their venture with me, and were in a proportionate degree cautious of risking comparisons that might prove detrimental to it. A club much talked of at the time, that bore the name of "*The Wolves*," was said to be banded together to put down anyone appearing in Kean's characters. I believed the report not to have been founded in strict fact; but it was currently received, and had its influence on the Covent Garden deliberations. Orestes was the part finally resolved on, as least likely to provoke party criticism; Charles Kemble would be all that could be desired in the dignified declamation of Pyrrhus, but for Hermione and Andromache, two first-rate tragic characters—where was the passion and pathos to give effect to them, and how to fill them? The plea of necessity at length bore down all previous objections, and the part of Hermione was cast to Mrs. Egerton, whose merits were confined to melodrama, whilst a special engagement was made with Mrs. Glover, the best comic actress then upon the stage, to appear as the weeping, widowed Andromache. A play so mounted—to borrow the French expression—was not very encouraging in the prospect of its attracting; but I had only to hold steadily to my purpose, and "do my best." Monday, September 16th, was fixed for my appearance. The interim was employed in settling myself in lodgings at 64 Frith Street, Soho, attending rehearsals, giving directions in the wardrobe for my dress, and thinking night and day upon the trial that was before me.

With most of us the course of life is uneven, and there are doubtless few who cannot recall periods of difficulty, of hazard and danger, where it was needful to string up every nerve to its utmost degree of tension in striving against the enfeebling

discouragement of doubt. Several times in my life it has fallen to my lot to encounter a crisis of this sort, where all seemed at stake, and of them all this was one of the most formidable; but the day arrived, and the venture must be made. Unaccustomed to the vast size of these large theatres, it was with a feeling like dismay that I entered on the stage; but to all appearance I managed to keep under control the flutter of my spirits, went through my rehearsal, inspected my room, and gave all directions necessary. Every courtesy was shown to me, and, as an ordinary civility to a *débutant*, whatever 'orders' or free admissions I might wish for my friends were liberally set at my disposal by the managers; but I had then no friends, not even an acquaintance, that I could call upon. After my early dinner I lay down, endeavouring to compose myself, till the hour appointed for my setting out to the theatre. The hackney-coach—a conveyance happily, in the advance of civilisation, "mingled with the things o'erpast"—was called, and I can almost fancy in recollecting it that I feel every disquieting jolt of the rumbling vehicle as it slowly performed the office of a hurdle in conveying me to the place of execution. The silent process of dressing was only interrupted by the call-boy Parsloe's voice, "Overture on, sir!" which sent a chill to my heart. The official rap at the door soon followed, and the summons, "Mr. Macready," made me instantly rally all my energies, and with a firm step I went forward to my trial. But the appearance of resolute composure assumed by the player at this turning-point of his life belies the internal struggles he endures. These eventful trials, in respect to the state of mind and body in which they are encountered, so resemble each other that one described describes all. The same agitation, and effort to master it, the dazzled vision, the short quick breath, the dry palate, the throbbing of the heart—all, however painfully felt, must be effectually disguised in the character the actor strives to place before his audience.

Abbott, as Pylades, was waiting for me at the side-scene, and when the curtain had risen, grasping his hand almost convulsively, I dashed upon the stage, exclaiming, as in a transport of the highest joy, "Oh, Pylades! what's life without a friend!" The welcome of applause that greeted my entrance (always so liberally bestowed by a London public

on every new performer) was all I could have desired; but it was not until the loud and long plaudits following the vehement burst of passion in the line, "Oh, ye Gods! give me Hermione or let me die!" that I gained any degree of self-possession. As the play proceeded I became more and more animated under the conflicting emotions of the distracted lover, and at the close, as I sank, "furiis agitatus Orestes," into the arms of Pylades, the prolonged cheers of my auditors satisfied me of my success. The custom of "calling for" the player had not then been introduced into our English theatres; but it was considered a sufficient testimony of a triumphant issue to give out the play for repetition on the Friday and Monday following. Congratulations were profusely tendered me by the various members of the Covent Garden company, who stopped me in passing from the stage to my dressing-room; and when summoned to the manager's room, Mr. Harris, in his peculiar way, observed, "Well, my boy, you have done capitally; and if you could carry a play along with such a cast, I don't know what you cannot do!". I was to dine with him the next day to settle further proceedings, and I returned to my lodgings in a state of mind like one not fully awake from a disturbing dream, grateful for my escape, yet almost questioning the reality of what had passed.

In the attendance of that evening it was observed that the members of the *corps dramatique* mustered in unusual force, among whom Kean, conspicuous in a private box, was very liberal of his applause. Would not the sleep be sweet and sound after such a termination to such a period of excitement and solicitude? It would seem so: but the mind is not yet at ease: the fate of the adventure is not yet decided; there is yet wanting the confirmation of public approval, and many an hour of a wakeful night is spent in painful uncertainty of what may be the tone of the morning press in its report of the evening's performance. With feverish impatience I awaited the arrival of the morning paper. However persons in public life may profess indifference to the manner in which their merits may be canvassed and registered in the public journals, I am a sceptic to the affectation of such insensibility. We cannot "read our history in a nation's eyes," but we may in the daily papers. Instances

may no doubt be adduced against them, on rare occasions, of prejudice or pique; but these cannot outweigh the value of the testimony borne by the body of the press, conducted as it is for the most part by men of character, education, and talent. I had no cause to be dissatisfied with its record of the verdict in my case, which, with differences and exceptions on items, was laudatory and cheering as to the general issue. The selection of the play was very generally condemned. The *Times*, in its first judgment on me, "allowing a certain amount of ability, did not conceive it was sufficient to shake Young, or much to intimidate Charles Kemble. Mr. Macready's last scene was executed with great vigour. He is not handsome in face or person, but we think him a man of clear conception, of much energy, and some skill." The *Globe* remarked, "Mr. Macready is above the middle size, and his countenance is pleasing; but we think tragedy requires features of a more prominent and strongly-marked description than those which he possesses. His eyes however are good, and full of fire; and when in the paroxysm of passion we mark their wild transitions, our attention is entirely withdrawn from the flatness of the features they irradiate. His voice, generally speaking, is full and musical. From our observation of his performance Mr. Macready is a man of mind. In this play the actor must do everything, for the author has done nothing. Mr. Macready laboured hard to supply the deficiency, and the sparks of his genius frequently kindled to a blaze the chaff of Mr. Phillips." Hazlitt, in the *Examiner*, at that time an authority almost supreme on subjects of theatrical taste, joins in the general objection to the play of 'The Distressed Mother,' in which "though," he observes, "a bad one for the display of his powers, Mr. Macready succeeded in making a decidedly favourable impression on the audience." "We have not the slightest hesitation," he continues, "in saying that Mr. Macready is by far the best tragic actor that has come out in our remembrance, with the exception of Mr. Kean."

Many compliments were paid me on the quality and compass of my voice; but if personal vanity—from which not even deformity and ugliness are exempt—had been among my flaws of character, I should have writhed under the report so widely promulgated "del mio brutto volto." Intimations were given in criticisms the most favourable that my face was not well

"calculated for the stage." The theatrical article in the *News* (a journal which, after Leigh Hunt's secession, still retained a reputation for its critical notices) began its review in these words: "Mr. Macready is the plainest and most awkwardly-made man that ever trod the stage, but he is an actor whom in some respects we prefer to Mr. Kean." An amusing proof of the persuasion so widely entertained of my personal disqualifications was afforded me at the theatre one evening soon after my *début*. A man and woman were seated before me in the second tier of boxes. In the course of their conversation the lady inquired of her companion whether he had "seen the new actor." "What, Macready?" he replied; "No, I've not seen him yet; I am told he is a capital actor, but a devilish ugly fellow: they say he is an ugly likeness of Liston!" My equability was not at all disturbed by the frankness of these comments, and I dare say I probably did not think myself quite so bad as I was represented. John Kemble, who, in addition to the talent he possessed, owed so much of his success to the external gifts of nature, may be expected to have attached vast importance to them, and certainly he seems to have sided with the informants of my friend of the second tier. When his brother Charles one day stated his conviction that I should attain the foremost rank in the profession, John Kemble, who had never seen me act, took a pinch of snuff, and with a significant smile rejoined, "Oh Charles! *con quel viso!*" My vanity however was not assailable on this point, for I had been, I am glad to say, early bullied into thinking humbly of myself in regard to personal appearance. I remembered, moreover, that Le Kain, Henderson, and Talma, in attaining the highest celebrity in their art, had found the plainness of their features no obstruction to the full display of those emotions which the deep study of their author awakened, and I fortified myself by their example with the hope of being able to develop my conceptions with vigour and distinctness, and, by the truth and earnestness of my own feelings, to ensure the sympathy of my auditors.

The 'Italian Lover,' as conflicting with no popular prepossession, was fixed upon for my second play, though with scarce a hope of its attraction, from its unbroken gloom and the inefficiency of its cast, which was even feebler than that of 'The Distressed Mother.' This dull tragedy, produced Monday,

September 30th, though it did not benefit the receipts of the theatre, rendered good service to me individually, raising me still higher in the estimation of those who had judged favourably of my first appearance, and winning over the suffrages of many who had been disposed to dispute my claims to notice.*

The last scene of Mentevole was often quoted by old play-goers in after-years, particularly by my friend Talfourd, as one in which the feelings of the audience were wound up to the highest pitch of intensity. But the applauses lavished on an unproductive play, however serviceable to my reputation, failed of course to satisfy the demands of the treasury, and in an impatient mood Mr. Harris announced me to appear in Othello and Iago alternately with Young. This was a desperate move, an injudicious one, and to me very distressing, as I had never acted or studied Iago, and had scarcely reasonable time allowed to master even the words of the part. Alas for the interests of art, when its difficulties and requirements are so little understood! Of my Shakespearean characters Othello was one I had least frequently performed; but remonstrance was useless: I had to buckle myself to my task, and in the noble Moor I gained some credit. The papers were more favourable than I had anticipated.†

For Iago, "ce maître achevé dans l'art de la dissimulation," he who is indeed "all things to all men," whose perfect accomplishment in craft might "send the learned Machiavel to school"—for that consummate deceiver (that in after-years I

* The *Times*, alluding to "the catastrophe in the fifth act, which produces an effect so terrible and so moving," speaks of me "as a various and skilful painter of the human passions. The last act, the most impassioned in the play, was the happiest test of Mr. Macready's talents. Subtlety, terror, rage, despair, and triumph were successively displayed by him with truth and energy, and he retired amidst loud acclamations."

† *The Times on Othello.*—"It must have effaced every trace of doubt from those who witnessed his performance with regard to the general measure of his capacity in the higher walks of the profession. The best proof of this actor's judgment, independently of his other powers, may be perceived in his contempt of all those gratuitous decorations, whether of tone or manner, which some of the most eminent cannot consent entirely to relinquish. It may be found also in his practice of employing all his force in those passages of noiseless but intense feeling, and exhibiting it in all its sublime depths, if not by a sudden look or startling gesture, yet by a condensation of vigorous utterance and masculine expression, from which few will be disposed to appeal."

made one of my most finished personations) I was altogether unprepared, and must have given a very bald and commonplace repetition of the text; there was, in fact, no character at all in the performance, which must have been a disappointment to the audience, as it was very embarrassing to me. Hazlitt's criticism upon the play was that "Young in Othello was like a great humming-top, and Macready in Iago like a mischievous boy whipping him"—a comparison quite as complimentary, I have no doubt, as my imperfect essay deserved.* After the long lapse of years, witnessing in their course so many changes, I can now look back and collectedly review the peculiarities of my position.

With the month of October Miss O'Neill had returned, her attraction undiminished; John Kemble was announced for his last season; whilst Kean at Drury Lane was performing his round of plays to well-filled houses, Young at Covent Garden was the welcomed representative of the leading tragic parts, the youthful and chivalrous ones having been for several years in the possession of Charles Kemble. Where then was a place for me? I should have better weighed all this before! It now became apparent I had made my venture too soon. My powers not yet sufficiently matured to challenge precedence, nothing was left for me but eagerly to watch for, and to the utmost improve, every opportunity that might present itself. The possession of talent was not denied to me, though critics were always not in agreement on its amount. I was in the first rank, though not yet the first. The step had however been taken, and was irrevocable, which placed me on a field of competition under unquestionably signal disadvantages, to which I must either succumb, and, by yielding to despondency, dwindle into "respectability" (as in theatrical language mediocrity is usually designated), or look to time to win for me, by dint of strenuous and unremitting efforts, the public acknowledgment of the power I felt within me. My motto henceforward must be from Seneca—"Inveniet viam, aut faciet." †

* *The Times on Iago.*—"Mr. Macready executed the part of Iago with limited, and but limited, success. It had passages of great and superlative merit; but, viewed as an entire piece of acting, it was faulty, unimpressive, and, as we have hinted, erroneously conceived in one or two of its capital features."

† "Find a way, or make one."—ED.

CHAPTER IX.

1816–1817.—Gambia—Miss Stephens—Her voice and acting—John Kemble in Cato—Kean's Sir Edward Mortimer in 'The Iron Chest' and Oroonoko—Booth's appearance as Richard III. at Covent Garden—Attempted rivalry with Kean—Kean's policy with him—Appears as Iago to Kean's Othello at Drury Lane—His complete discomfiture—Macready acting with Booth as Valentio in 'The Conquest of Taranto'—Booth's retreat.

AN operatic drama, called 'The Slave,' written by Morton, which embraced the talents of Terry, Emery, Liston, Jones, Sinclair, Duruset, Mrs. Davenport, and the charming Miss Stephens, was read in the green-room; and the slave, the hero of the piece, Gambia, one of the "faultless monsters, that the world ne'er saw," was confided to me. Placed in situations of strong interest, with high-flown sentiments and occasional bursts of passion, its effect was unequivocal, answering the fullest expectations of the management. This play, supported by first-rate comic acting, Bishop's music, and the all-powerful charm of Miss Stephen's voice, conduced much to my advantage by keeping me in a favourable point of view before the public during a prosperous run of more than thirty nights.* It was in one of the rehearsals of this part I met with an accident that might have been attended with much graver consequences. To secure the retreat of Zelinda and Clifton, who were escaping from their pursuers, I had to cut away a wooden bridge, over which they had just passed; in its fall a rough spar, as I turned round, caught in my coat-pocket, and dragged me down backwards with it from the platform on which I was standing, a distance

* *The Times on 'The Slave.'*—"Mr. Macready was extremely well received. The black slave was no bad specimen of his peculiar talent, which seems to lie in the broad and boisterous ostentation of tempestuous passion, for which he has only one language, nervous certainly, but rather monotonous; though we must do him the justice to say that he uttered many passages in the play with extreme tenderness, pathos, and delicacy."

of about twelve feet. The people on the stage made an instant outcry, and Miss Stephens, who was directly opposite, fainted away. I was taken up considerably hurt, and conveyed to my lodgings, where I remained on the sofa several days attended by Wilson, at that time one of the most eminent surgeons in London. This occurrence retarded the production of the play, and I had not recovered from my lameness when obliged to appear in it.

I cannot pass the name of Miss Stephens, universally popular as it was, without notice. Criticism is disarmed before it, and memory seems to take pleasure in lingering over it, in recalling that fascinating power which, through the blended effects of person, voice, and manner, she, with apparent unconsciousness, exercised over her audience. Every performer of repute had his or her particular eulogists and champions, but she was the favourite of all. The distance dividing the spectator from the player whose exertions he pays for seemed lessened in the recognition of her, for it was with a joyous eagerness that the frequenters of the theatre used to welcome her as she nightly appeared before them. "Ce petit nez retroussé" was as irresistible in its temporary influence over an assembled multitude as Roxalane's over the imperious Soliman. Nor was this due to any superiority of dramatic talent, for in all the various characters allotted to her she represented only one: but the magic spell of that was never known to fail. By whatever name it might be distinguished in the playbills, that one was 'Miss Stephens,' or, if not infringing the respect claimed by her present rank (Countess of Essex), it would express more accurately the feeling she inspired to use that familiar abbreviation of her Christian name (Kitty Stephens), by which, in the fond admiration of the public, she was generally known. Her voice was of the most exquisite sweetness and extraordinary compass; there was occasional archness and humour in her comic scenes; always intelligence; and, combined with an almost rustic or childish simplicity, a correctness of judgment that never deserted her. The partiality that everywhere attended her gave truth to the words that Carlos in his beautiful song addressed to her:

> "For friends in all the old you'll meet,
> And lovers in the young."

A very miserable adaptation by Reynolds of Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Humorous Lieutenant,' a play not worth revival, in which Young, Terry, Liston, Miss Stephens, and myself had parts, was produced January 18th, 1817, and after a very few nights withdrawn.

I now began to settle down into what was to be my regular course of life. In the reduction of the army which had taken place, the 2nd battalion of the 30th Regiment was disbanded, and my brother being put in consequence on half-pay, took up his quarters with me. I had the good fortune besides to discover other relations and connexions living in London, or rather they—a less difficult matter—discovered me, which gave me introduction to some very agreeable society. It is from the depths of his own mind the artist must draw the inspiration that is to lift him above the ordinary level; but to perfect his style and refine his taste he cannot extend too far his acquaintance with the varieties of excellence in every domain of art. Whilst painting and sculpture therefore afforded me, in subjects of contemplation, suggestions of grace and truth of expression, the theatre presented me with opportunities of comparing or contrasting them with the living models, of which I diligently availed myself; though depressing doubts began to intrude themselves on my mind as to the probability of the opportunities I hoped for, making my study more a duty than a pleasure.

My vacant evenings were now frequent, so many nights being engrossed by Miss O'Neill's and Kemble's performances; but were not all idly spent. The theatres offered subjects of study to me which I did not neglect. At Covent Garden (October 25th) Kemble made his first appearance this season in Addison's 'Cato,' and I early took places near the stage in the dress-circle, my intention being to see him through his round of characters, to convince myself, by the most careful and patient observation, how far his title to praise might be exaggerated by his panegyrists, or his demerits magnified by his detractors; for taste, or what would be called so, has its factions, sometimes as vehement as political ones. The house was moderately filled; there was sitting-room in the pit, and the dress-circle was not at all crowded. I noted this, having expected a manifestation of public enthusiasm which was not there. But there was

Kemble! As he sat majestically in his curule chair, imagination could not supply a grander or more noble presence. In face and form he realised the most perfect ideal that ever enriched the sculptor's or the painter's fancy, and his deportment was in accord with all of outward dignity and grace that history attributes to the *patres conscripti.* In one particular, however, I was greatly disappointed: having heard much of his scholarly correctness, I expected in his costume to see a model of the *gens togata;* but the cumbrous drapery in which he was enveloped bore no resemblance, in any one fold or peculiarity, to the garment that distinguished the Roman as one of the *rerum dominos.* The *ensemble* was nevertheless remarkably striking, and the applause that greeted him proved the benches to be occupied by very devoted admirers. The tragedy, five acts of declamatory, unimpassioned verse, the monotony of which, correct as his emphasis and reading was, Kemble's husky voice and laboured articulation did not tend to dissipate or enliven, was a tax upon the patience of the hearers. The frequently-recurring sentiments on patriotism and liberty, awakening no response, were listened to with respectful, almost drowsy attention. But, like an eruptive volcano from some level expanse, there was one burst that electrified the house. When Portius entered with the exclamation,—

> "Misfortune on misfortune! grief on grief!
> My brother Marcius,"—

Kemble, with a start of unwonted animation, rushed across the stage to him, huddling questions one upon another with extraordinary volubility of utterance—

> "Ha! what has he done?—
> Has he forsook his post? Has he given way?
> Did he look tamely on and let them pass?"

Then listening with intense eagerness to the relation of Portius, —how

> "Long at the head of his few faithful friends
> He stood the shock of a whole host of foes,
> Till, obstinately brave, and bent on death,
> Oppress'd with multitudes, he greatly fell"—

as he caught the last word he gasped out convulsively, as if suddenly relieved from an agony of doubt, "I am satisfied!"

and the theatre rang with applause most heartily and deservedly bestowed. This was his great effect—indeed his single effect; and great and refreshing as it was, it was not enough so to compensate for a whole evening of merely sensible cold declamation. I watched him intently throughout—not a look or tone was lost by me; his attitudes were stately and picturesque, but evidently prepared; even the care he took in the disposition of his mantle was distinctly observable. If meant to present a picture of Stoicism, the success might be considered unequivocal, but unbroken, except by the grand effect above described; though it might satisfy the classic antiquary, the want of variety and relief rendered it uninteresting, and often indeed tedious. Charles Kemble made the most of Juba, in which there was little to be done.

Kean's appearance in two new characters—Sir Edward Mortimer in Colman's play of 'The Iron Chest,' and Oroonoko in Southern's tragedy of that name—attracted me two nights at Drury Lane, and confirmed my opinion of his unquestionable genius. The house was very good, but not full, to 'The Iron Chest;' to 'Oroonoko' it was indifferent. Sir Edward Mortimer was one of Kean's most finished portraitures. He had grasped the complete conception of the character, the Falkland of Godwin's 'Caleb Williams,' and was consistently faithful to it through every varied shade of passion. There was an absence of all trick in the performances. Scarcely once through the whole part did he give way to that unpleasant mode of preluding a sentence (an occasional habit with him) by a hesitation, or a sound as of a half-laugh, like a cue for the applause of *claqueurs*. He had subjected his style to the restraint of the severest taste. His elocution was flowing, discriminating, and most impressive. In his deportment there was the dignified ease of one accustomed to receive obedience; the mild and gentle manner of his address to his dependants spoke the benevolence of his nature, while his woe-worn aspect told of some settled grief that was preying on his heart. The very mournfulness of tone in which, before his entrance, he called for "Winterton," prepared the spectator for the picture of blight and sorrow that his appearance presented. When in Wilford's utterance of the word "murder" the chord was struck that seemed to vibrate through every fibre of his frame, the internal struggle

to regain his self-possession quite thrilled the audience. His trembling hand turned over rapidly the leaves of the book he held, as if to search its pages, that were evidently a blank to his bewildered sight, till the agony of his feelings overbore all efforts at repression, and with tiger fury he sprang upon the terrified youth. But to instance particular points in a personation disfigured by so few blemishes almost seems an injustice to a most artistic whole. Throughout the play the actor held absolute sway over his hearers: alike when nearly maddened by the remembrance of his wrong and the crime it had provoked, in his touching reflections on the present and future recompense of a well-regulated life, in pronouncing the appalling curse on Wilford's head; or, when looking into his face, and in the desolateness of his spirit, with a smile more moving than tears, he faintly uttered—"None know my tortures!" His terrible avowal of the guilt that had embittered existence to him brought, as it were, the actual perpetration of the deed before us; the frenzy of his vengeance seemed rekindled in all its desperation, as he uttered the words—"I stabbed him to the heart." He paused as if in horror at the sight still present to him, and, following with his dilated eye the dreadful vision, he slowly continued—"And my oppressor rolled lifeless at my foot!" The last scene was a worthy climax to a performance replete with beauties, that in its wildest bursts of passion never "overstepped the modesty of nature." Colman, who had tutored Elliston in the part, and frequently seen Young's very successful assumption of it, must have felt pride in witnessing this representation. He was more jealous of the effect of this than of any other of his dramas. He was put into a state of extreme perturbation once on the occasion of a very indifferent player, who was the hero of a private theatre in the Tottenham Court Road, appearing as Mortimer at the Haymarket Theatre. On tenter-hooks during the whole play, when in the last scene Falkner, the representative of Mortimer, exclaimed in his delirium, "Where is my honour now?" Colman could not restrain himself, but called out, "I wish your honour was in Tottenham Court Road again with all my heart!"

'Oroonoko' had of late years ceased to be attractive, nor could all the talent of Kean in the principal character restore its

popularity. The introduction of Aboan, his back bleeding from the driver's lash, is one of those revolting spectacles that come within the prohibitory canon of the poet:

> "Multaque tolles
> Ex oculis quæ mox narret facundia præsens;" *

and were there no other causes of exception, would remain an insuperable one, as exciting emotions not merely painful, but disagreeable. Ben Jonson arraigns Shakespeare on the score of taste in suffering Desdemona to be smothered in sight of the audience, which he condemns as simply "horror;" and it was Coleridge's observation, that whilst terror, the legitimate passion of tragedy, touches the heart, horror makes a descent, and affects the stomach. Kean had bestowed great pains on the study of the part, and, though more unequal than his Sir Edward Mortimer, gave a masterly delineation of the noble African. In his calm submission to his fate his demeanour was still princely, and his reproaches struck deeper from the temper with which they were uttered. Among the effective passages with which his performance abounded, I could instance as one, from his mode of delivery, never to be forgotten, his prayer for his Imoinda. After replying to Blandford, "No, there is nothing to be done for me!" he remained for a few moments in apparent abstraction, then with a concentration of feeling that gave emphasis to every word, clasping his hands together, in tones most tender, distinct, and melodious, he poured out, as if from the very depths of his heart, his earnest supplication:

> "Thou God adored! thou ever-glorious sun!
> If she be yet on earth, send me a beam
> Of thy all-seeing power to light me to her!
> Or if thy sister goddess has preferr'd
> Her beauty to the skies, to be a star,
> Oh, tell me where she shines, that I may stand
> Whole nights and gaze upon her!"

With all his extraordinary power he would often descend to court applause by trickery, at the expense of correctness, as in

> * . . . . . Such scenes
> Withdrawn should be from the spectator's eye,
> And spoken narrative the plot supply.
> HORACE, *Art of Poetry*.—ED. TRANS.

this play, against the remonstrance of Rae, the stage-manager, he altered the text, "What, is he gone?" to win the clapping of "the groundlings" by a trick of voice, "Where is he? Eh! Eh! gone!" These were littlenesses which a man so wonderfully gifted could well afford to have held himself above.

An event now occurred, that could not fail to act in some measure as a discouragement to a young actor circumstanced like myself, who for the ultimate recognition of his claims placed his single reliance on severe and honest endeavours in the mastery of his art. I had now to discover, what experience has since made familiar to me, that notoriety has a charm for "the fond many," outvaluing for a time (though only for a time) the more solid pretensions of artistic truth. A report had reached the managers of Covent Garden of a Mr. Booth (who in figure, voice, and manner so closely resembled Kean that he might be taken for his twin brother) acting Richard the Third at Brighton and Worthing with the greatest success. An appearance at Covent Garden was offered to him with the promise of an engagement if successful. Accordingly on the 12th of February (1817) he appeared in Gloster, and certainly on his first entrance on the stage, with a similar coiffure and dress, he might have been thought Kean himself. With considerable physical power, a strong voice, a good deal of bustle, some stage experience, and sufficient intelligence to follow out the traditional effects of the part, he succeeded in winning the applause and favour of his audience, and repeated the performance on the following night. He was announced in consequence again for the 17th, but in the interim the question of his engagement was mooted. The managers offered him £8 per week, which he declined, and withdrew his name. This, together with the reported similarity of his figure and manner to Kean's (with whom his admirers ventured to compare him), made some little stir in the theatrical world. Kean, who was supposed not to feel complimented by the comparison, drove to Booth's lodgings, and in the most friendly manner informed him that he had procured an engagement for him from the committee of Drury Lane, and that his carriage was waiting to take them to the theatre, where all would be settled at once. Booth readily went with him, an engagement at £10 per week was agreed on and signed, and Booth was immediately

advertised to appear in Iago to Kean's Othello on the 20th of February.

The theatre was crowded to the very ceiling on that night, which was often spoken of long afterwards for the extraordinary effect produced by Kean's acting.* He seems to have put forth all his power, and according to the testimony of Hazlitt, Procter, Hamilton, Reynolds, and other excellent judges, he never acted as he did on this occasion. My brother, who had not before seen him, could only obtain standing-room in a corner of the slips, but, despite his inconvenient position and consequent weariness, returned in raptures of admiration at the performance. Booth was not only obscured, but hidden; no one seemed to give a thought to him. The question of comparison was completely set at rest. The tragedy was announced for repetition on the 22nd, but Booth was not well enough to appear. He sent a note about three o'clock on that day, stating that he was very ill and ordered to leave town for change of air. On inquiry at his lodgings his wife neither knew that he was ill nor that he had left town. On the evening of the same day he addressed a letter to the committee, to the effect that he could not appear in his own characters at Drury Lane, and that he had in consequence renewed his engagements with Covent Garden. Briefly, he broke his engagement with the Drury Lane committee, and returned to Covent Garden, where he resumed the part of Richard III. on the 25th.

By this breach of contract, which was circumstantially given with his letters in the Drury Lane playbills, the indignation of the public was raised to such a pitch, that Covent Garden Theatre, where before he had played to scant audiences, was now filled with persons exasperated against him. The tumult was so great, that not a word of the play was heard. The house was again filled on March the 1st to the same play, and with the same result. Apologies and appeals, which

* *The Times on Othello.—Kean and Booth.*—"As Iago Mr. Booth was highly respectable. But the chief *éclat* of the performance was due to Mr. Kean. This great actor excelled on the present occasion all his preceding efforts . . . . There were scenes in this play which we had never yet beheld so ably represented, and there were improvements in Kean's acting of which we did not think the tragedian's art had been susceptible."

could not be heard in the theatre, were made in the playbills, and at length silence was obtained, but from comparatively deserted benches. With the subsidence of "the row" the attraction diminished. The Drury Lane committee brought an action against Booth and the Covent Garden managers, but afterwards dropped it. Kean wrote a letter to the papers, stating that "The Wolves" club no longer existed—a proof it had existed—and so the squabble ended. But the Covent Garden managers, hoping still to draw some profit from the notoriety it had given birth to, determined to push their experiment with Booth to the utmost. Sir Giles Overreach (in which Kean had made quite a sensation) was his second part, in the last scene of which he resorted to a manœuvre which was severely commented upon. One of the attendants who held him was furnished with a sponge filled with blood (rose-pink), which he, unseen by the audience, squeezed into his mouth to convey the idea of his having burst a blood-vessel. It is not by such means as these that the dramatic poet is to find support from the artist. Persisting, in the theatrical phrase, in trying to "keep him up," the managers gave Booth Sir Edward Mortimer, Posthumus in 'Cymbeline,' and Fitzharding in Tobin's play of 'The Curfew.' It would scarcely be expected that I should look with much complacency on the preference they showed, though little or no advance resulted in the public estimation from their policy.* In 'The Curfew' I volunteered to act the part of Robert, in which is one scene of considerable power, and its effect answered my expectations. But now came on a trial to submit to which required all my nerve and power of endurance. A new play, called 'The Conquest of Taranto, or St. Clara's Eve,' written by Dimond, was read in the manager's room. An original part is justly considered (as Kemble before me, and as I myself in the Slave had already proved) of the greatest service to an actor; and the hero of this piece, Rinaldo, with the hope and purpose of establishing him firmly in the highest favour with the public, was allotted to Booth. Young had, of course, a very prominent

* *Morning Herald on 'The Curfew.'—Booth.*—"That the gentleman does possess some talent we have already expressed our belief; but that it is not of that extent which his friends would have us imagine the public voice has more than once unequivocally declared."

character, Egerton an important one; Miss Stephens, Sinclair, &c., were among the *dramatis personæ*. A part called Valentio was forced upon me, the managers refusing to accept the forfeit, thirty pounds, which I would willingly have paid for my release. There was scarcely a line of passion in it—one of the meanest, most despicable villains that a romancer's invention ever teemed with. I looked on myself as inevitably ruined by the exposure to such a degradation. But there was no redress, no escape. I could not, sensitive and indiscreet as I was, suppress at the rehearsals expression of the bitterness I felt, and was unwisely stung to anger by Mr. Booth's sneering observation one morning, "I think your part is as good as mine." "Will you change with me?" was my reply, sufficiently answered by his significant and triumphant smile.

The day of representation came on, and I went from the rehearsal to my lodgings sick with nervousness and apprehension, where I lay down to steady my nerves and prepare myself for the disapprobation that already seemed to ring in my ears. The play proceeded rather tamely to the second act, in which Young roused the audience by his splendid declamation. From that point it flagged in interest (Booth making no impression), and was indeed drooping, when his greatest scene came on. This was in the last act, in which he had to relate in frantic rage to Valentio, his pretended friend, the treachery that had been practised on him, with denunciations of the act, and of the unknown villain (Valentio) who had so basely ensnared him. Here was the anticipated climax of his triumph; but the interest of the scene took altogether a contrary direction. The agitation of the traitor, as with averted face he stood shuddering under the imprecations on his guilt, and the expression of his shame and remorse, so completely engrossed attention and excited the spectators, that loud and frequent applauses broke forth, interrupting and drowning the concluding words of Rinaldo's speeches, so that the effect of the dialogue was directly the reverse of what the author had intended and the managers expected.* With

* *Morning Herald on 'The Conquest of Taranto.'*—"There were some good scenes, particularly one between Mr. Macready and Mr. Booth, which probably saved the piece. Mr. Macready's acting was excellent throughout, and mainly contributed to the success of the piece."

the failure of this play, which was acted only a few nights, the attempt to give prominence to Booth was abandoned, he only appearing four times more during the remainder of the season.

It may seem strange that the event in this instance should so utterly have defeated expectation; but from the many opportunities subsequently afforded me of testing the fallibility of opinion in these cases, the conclusion has been forced upon me that the most experienced judges cannot with certainty predict the effect in representation of plays which they may hear read, or even see rehearsed. Some latent weakness, some deficient link in the chain of interest, imperceptible till in actual presence, will oftentimes balk hopes apparently based on the firmest principles, and baffle judgments respected as oracular.

CHAPTER X.

1817.—First acquaintance with Richard Lalor Sheil—His appearance and conversation—The 'Apostate'—Macready as Pescara—Importance of acting at rehearsal—Ludwig Tieck's opinion of Macready—John Kemble's last nights—Reappearance of Mrs. Siddons for his benefit—Kemble's last performance of Macbeth—Talma present—Kemble's powers and failings as an artist—Dinner to Talma at the Clarendon Hotel.

THIS unlooked-for result ought, perhaps, to have acted as a lesson, teaching me for the future confidence in the ultimate triumph of careful and honest study; but, not enjoying the advantage of a very sanguine temperament, my spirits had begun to give way in contemplating the impediments already interposed to my attainment of the highest rank; and in speculating on the adverse chances that might further arise, I began to cast about my thoughts in quest of some other mode of life less subject to those alternations of hope and dejection which so frequently and so painfully acted upon my temper. Still my resolution never wavered to do, as far as in me lay, the best in whatever was to be done, and an occasion soon arose to put my firmness to the test. "A call" was sent me to attend the reading of a new tragedy. The author was Richard Sheil, a young briefless Irish barrister, recently married to a very pretty woman, niece of the Irish Master of the Rolls. No one could look at Sheil and not be struck with his singular physiognomy. A quick sense of the humorous and a lively fancy gave constant animation to his features, which were remarkable for their flexibility. His chin projected rather sharply, and his mouth was much indrawn. The pallor of his sunken cheek suggested a weakness of constitution, but lent additional lustre to his large, deep-set eyes, that shone out with

expression from underneath his massive overhanging brow. His conversation was most delightful, richly stored as his mind was with the literature of many tongues, and teeming with the original conceptions of a very fertile imagination. It was at the chambers of our mutual friend Wallace, in the Temple, that I made his acquaintance, which soon ripened into a friendship that continued unbroken to his death. With his dramatic successes my own fortunes became in some measure identified; but it was not with less interest that I watched his upward progress from his spirit-stirring appeals in the Catholic Association in behalf of his disqualified countrymen to his frequent displays of eloquence in the House of Commons, and his eventual participation in the offices of our government.

Young, Charles Kemble, Miss O'Neill (who took a great interest in the author), and others, with myself, met in the manager's room to hear him read his play, 'The Apostate.' The peculiarity of his appearance, regardless as he was of the niceties of dress, together with his harsh, shrill voice, caused several of his auditors at first to cast furtive glances from one to the other significant of no very high expectation; but his intense earnestness and impassioned delivery soon riveted attention, and all were presently absorbed in the progress of the scenes. Applause followed their close; and as the written parts were distributed to their several representatives, my forebodings were verified when the MS. of Pescara was put into my hands. Mournfully and despondently I received it. Charles Kemble's consolation for me in the green-room was, "Why, William, it is no doubt a disagreeable part, but there is passion in it." Which being true, there was nothing for me but to think how to work it out with the most powerful effect, and to work I went upon it with my usual determination.

It was the custom of the London actors, especially the leading ones, to do little more at rehearsals than read or repeat the words of their parts, marking on them their entrances and exits, as settled by the stage-manager, and their respective places on the stage. To make any display of passion or energy would be to expose oneself to the ridicule or sneers of the green-room, and few could be more morbidly sensitive to this than myself. But the difficulty of attaining before an audience

perfect self-possession, which only practice can give, made me resolve to rehearse with the same earnestness as I would act; reasoning with myself that if practice was of the value attributed to it, this would be a mode of multiplying its opportunities, of proving the effect of my performance, and of putting myself so much at ease in all I might intend to do that the customary nervousness of a first night would fail to disturb or prevent the full development of my conceptions. Upon making the experiment I may quote Dryden's line, "'Tis easy said, but oh! how hardly tried!" I found it much more difficult to force myself to act in the morning with the cold responses and the composed looks of Miss O'Neill, Young, and the rest than at night before the most crowded auditory. Frequently in after-years when I have given certain directions to actors rehearsing, the answer has been, "Sir, I never can act at rehearsal, but I will do it at night." To which I had only one reply, "Sir, if you cannot do it in the morning, you cannot do it at night; you must then do something because you must go on, but what you cannot do now, or cannot learn to do, you will not be more able to do then." The task I found a very hard one, but I fought successfully against my *mauvaise honte*, and went doggedly to it. By this means I acquired more ease in passing through the varieties of passion, confirming myself in the habit of acting to the scene alone, and, as it were, ignoring the presence of an audience, and thus came to wield at will what force or pathos I was master of.

Our rehearsals, now my regular school of practice, brought us to the night of the play's representation, May 3rd, to which I went with fear and trembling; but I knew what I had to do, and I did it. The tragedy obtained a complete success. Young acted admirably the old Moor Malec; Charles Kemble was spirited, chivalrous, and gallant in Hemeya; and Miss O'Neill beautiful in Florinda. In her apology for her love of Hemeya the words seemed to flow in music from her chiselled lips. It was the perfection of elocution. In the fourth act her efforts to save her lover, and her recoil of horror from the proposals of Pescara, raised the enthusiasm of the audience to a tumult of applause, and the act-drop fell amidst the acclamations of the whole house. The character of Pescara

tended to improve my position with the critical portion of the playgoing public, but in its extreme odiousness rather prejudiced me with the generality.* At a later period a testimony was afforded me, in the opinion of the illustrious Ludwig Tieck, which more than compensated me for the pains I had taken and the anxiety I had undergone. In his 'Letters on the English Drama,' in 1817, he records the impression produced on him by this performance. In remarking upon it he says, "This villain was admirably represented, and was indeed so vehement, truthful, and powerful a personation, that for the first time since my arrival in England I felt myself recalled to the best days of German acting. If the young man continues in this style, he will go far."

Kemble's last nights were now drawing to a close, but not answering the manager's expectation of their attraction, were given for benefits to those performers who chose to pay their extra price. He acted Hotspur for Young, Macbeth for Charles Kemble, the Stranger for Miss O'Neill, Hamlet for Miss Stephens, Wolsey for Farley, and Penruddock for Blanchard. I saw him in Hotspur, Macbeth, the Stranger, Hamlet, Wolsey, Brutus, Octavian, King John, Lord Townley, and Coriolanus. Of these I gave the preference to King John, Wolsey, the Stranger, Brutus, and his peerless Coriolanus. On his last performance of Macbeth Mrs. Siddons was induced to reappear for her brother Charles Kemble's benefit. The theatre was crowded. The musicians were ejected from the orchestra, which was filled with seats for spectators, among whom was Talma himself, then on a visit to England. As a very great favour Charles Kemble gave me a place in the third circle. Immense applause greeted the entrance of the Queen of Tragedy, the unrivalled Siddons, as Lady Macbeth. It was indeed Mrs. Siddons in person, but no longer the Mrs. Siddons on whose every look and accent enraptured crowds would hang breathless with delight and astonishment—who

* *From the Morning Herald, May 5th, on 'The Apostate.'*—"The author must feel much indebted to Mr. Macready for the bold and masterly style in which he represented Count Pescara. He was particularly happy in the severe irony which constitutes a prominent feature of this tyrant; and when his indignation was aroused, and he could no longer conceal the passions which were consuming his heart, his delivery was rapid, fervent, and impressive. He looked the character completely."

lent to dramatic poetry pathos and power beyond what the author himself could have conceived. Years had done their work, and those who had seen in her impersonations the highest "glories of her art" now felt regret that she should have been prevailed on to leave her honoured retirement, and force a comparison between the grandeur of the past and the feeble present. It was not a performance, but a mere repetition of the poet's text—no flash, no sign of her pristine all-subduing genius!

Through the whole first four acts the play moved heavily on: Kemble correct, tame, and ineffective; but in the fifth, when the news was brought, "The queen, my lord, is dead," he seemed struck to the heart; gradually collecting himself, he sighed out, "She should have died hereafter!" then, as if with the inspiration of despair, he hurried out, distinctly and pathetically, the lines:

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time,
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle.
> Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing,"—

rising to a climax of desperation that brought down the enthusiastic cheers of the closely-packed theatre. All at once he seemed carried away by the genius of the scene. At the tidings of "the wood of Birnam moving," he staggered, as if the shock had struck the very seat of life, and in the bewilderment of fear and rage could just ejaculate the words "Liar and slave!" then lashing himself into a state of frantic rage, ended the scene in perfect triumph. His shrinking from Macduff when the charm on which his life hung was broken by the declaration that his antagonist was "not of woman born" was a masterly stroke of art; his subsequent defiance was most heroic; and at his death Charles Kemble received him in his arms, and laid him gently on the ground, his physical powers being unequal to further effort.

The language of criticism is frequently dogmatic, exacting deference from the authoritative tone it assumes, sometimes without the needful preliminary application to the subject of which it treats. It was said by no incompetent judge, "De pictore, sculptore, fictore, nisi artifex, judicare non potest."* But this opinion, as applied to the theatrical art, is repudiated by many; and, as I have before observed, it is held by some writers in England (though not in France), that no particular study is requisite to make a critic or connoisseur of "acting." I have been led by observation to think differently; but, although my active life has been devoted chiefly to the study of poetry and playing, I make no pretension to the critic's chair; and in trying to describe with accuracy what was palpable to my senses, advance my opinions no further than in stating the impressions made upon a very excitable temperament and a very sensitive organisation.

On the sum of Kemble's merits judgments differed: that he was a great artist all allowed. His person was cast in the heroic mould, and, as may be seen in Lawrence's splendid portraits of him in Coriolanus, Hamlet, and Rolla, reached the most perfect ideal of manly beauty. But he had serious disadvantages to contend with in a very disagreeable voice, husky and untuneable, and in a constitutional asthma that necessitated a prolonged and laborious indraught of his breath, and obliged him for the sake of distinctness to adopt an elaborate mode of utterance, enunciating every letter in every word. His limbs were not supple—indeed his stately bearing verged on stiffness; and his style, more suited to the majestic, the lofty, and the stern than the pathetic, might not inaptly, in respect to his movement on the stage, be termed statuesque. Mrs. Siddons, speaking of him to Reynolds, the dramatist, said, "My brother John in his most impetuous bursts is always careful to avoid any discomposure of his dress or deportment; but in the whirlwind of passion I lose all thought of such matters:" and this forgetfulness of self was one of the elements of her surpassing power. The admission of Mrs. Inchbald, one of Kemble's most ardent worshippers, corroborates the opinion very generally entertained of his phlegmatic temperament. In the part of Oswyn, in

* No one but an artist can criticise the works of artists.—*Pliny*, Epist. i. 10. —Ed.

Congreve's tragedy of 'The Mourning Bride,' she says, "Garrick had great spirit and fire in every scene, but not the fire of love. Kemble has not even the sparks. Yet Kemble looks nobly, majestically, in Oswyn, and reminds the audience of the lines:—

> "'. . . tall pile,
> Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
> * * * * *
> Looking tranquillity.'"*

In all he did the study was apparent. The "ars celare artem,"† with all his great talent, he did not reach; but he compelled the respect and admiration where he did not excite the sympathies of his audience. His noble form and stately bearing attracted and fixed observation, and his studious correctness retained attention; but in the torrent and tempest of passion he had not the sustained power of Talma or Kean, but, like a Rembrandt picture, his performances were remarkable for most brilliant effects, worked out with wonderful skill on a sombre ground, which only a great master of his art could have achieved, and of which I have endeavoured to convey some faint idea in my description of scenes of 'Cato' and 'Macbeth.' In his management he was a strict disciplinarian, following the traditional theatrical observances; and the stage was greatly indebted to him for the reformation he effected in the barbarous costume (Romans with powdered heads and knee-breeches) that was in vogue until his day.

Before I left town, which I did on leave of absence previous to the close of the season, the Covent Garden actors gave a sumptuous dinner at the Clarendon Hotel to Talma, to which of course Kemble was invited. It was intended to be a convivial affair, and the only speech was a short one in English from Talma, expressive of his sense of the flattering attentions paid him, and of the gratification he felt in participating with his esteemed friend Kemble in the pleasure of such a meeting. In the course of the evening Kemble sent, by a waiter, to ask me to drink wine with him, which Charles Kemble, who was my next neighbour, hearing, observed to me, "You may think very little, William, of this as a compliment, but I assure you it is

* *The Mourning Bride*, act ii. sc. 1.—ED.

† "The art of concealing art."—ED.

a great deal from my brother." Kemble's general manner was cold and austere, and he was considered in the theatre to be proud and imperious. I therefore felt it to be very kind and complimentary in the company of so many my seniors to make so young a man an exception to his general practice. My absence from London prevented me from witnessing his farewell performance in 'Coriolanus,' and the presentation of the testimonial at the parting dinner given to him in Freemasons' Hall, to which I subscribed. It was on that occasion that Campbell's beautiful 'Valedictory Stanzas' were read by Young, and on their subsequent publication in the papers many were the voices that echoed the line, "Pride of the British stage! a long, a last adieu!"

CHAPTER XI.

1817–1818.—A diplomatic adventure—Second London season—Dumont—Wish to leave the stage, go to Oxford, and enter the Church as a profession—Life at a boarding-house—Discussion on Wordsworth's poetry—William Whewell—A strange history—'Retribution'—Accident in the green-room—Brother sails for India—His character—'Rob Roy'—Sonnet by Barry Cornwall—Charles Lloyd—Introduction to Charles Lamb and Talfourd—Sheil's 'Balamira'—The 'Castle of Paluzzi'—Miss O'Neill in Lady Randolph—'Cymbeline'—Close of the London season.

My summer was passed in acting, among others, my new London characters, Mentevole, Gambia, Valentio, and Pescara, at my father's theatres in Newcastle, Berwick, Carlisle, Dumfries, and Whitehaven. These engagements unhappily did not pass off without disagreements between my father and myself, for which, although with indisputably just grounds of complaint, I am now disposed to blame myself in not extending a more indulgent consideration for the modes of reasoning and judging upon which he acted. Some weeks of leisure were spent at my old favourite resort, Holy Island, and with my sisters at a little fishing village on the south bank of the Tweed, whence we made excursions among the Cheviots, and to Wark, Norham, and other places of historical and legendary interest. From Whitehaven I made a trip in the weekly packet to the Isle of Man, where I spent three days, visiting Douglas, Peel, Castleton, surveying the Tynwald Mount, whence the laws of the island are proclaimed, and other spots inviting the traveller's curiosity. From Carlisle, where I parted with my father, having happily accommodated our differences, I proceeded *en route* to London, as far as Manchester. On the road I fell into conversation with one of the coach passengers, a very gentlemanlike young man. The free-masonry of youth and youthful spirits is quick in establishing

acquaintance, and as we met and messed together in the same coffee-room at the Bridgewater Arms Hotel, he very soon gave me his confidence, and requested my services in the discharge of rather a delicate embassy. He held a commission in the insurgent force of one of the South American Spanish colonies, and was about to embark for the New World. But he had contracted an engagement with a young lady, who, against her guardian's wishes, had promised him her hand, and they had since prevailed with her to revoke her given word. The blank this made in the picture which his too credulous fancy had painted, of something dear to cling to and strive for in his desperate enterprise, was naturally dispiriting and mortifying to him. The voyage to the Pacific would have been to him a pleasure excursion with the poet's song upon his lips:

> "Come o'er the sea,
> Maiden, with me;
> Mine through tempests, storms, and snows.
> Seasons may roll,
> But the true soul
> Burns the same where'er it goes."

And he could confront danger, so he supposed, with still more ardent hope and more resolute confidence, possessed of her; but to forego the promise of that sustaining solace in trials and partner in his successes he could not bring down his sanguine spirit. The fickle fair one lived with her relations in Manchester, and his earnest request to me was that I would be the bearer of a letter to her, and deliver it into her hand. My representations as to the awkwardness of such a charge being delegated to a person a stranger to all parties were overruled; it was his last hope, and, although desperate, it would be a consolation to him to have it tried. Reasoning was vain against his importunity, and, though sympathising with him, it was with reluctance that I yielded at length to his entreaties. He walked with me to the Oxford Road, and pointed out the house to me. With the best face I could put on I went on my strange errand, and, inquiring for the young lady, was ushered into the awful presence of an aunt. Aunts, from Mrs. Malaprop downwards, are usually regarded by young people in the condition of my friend as formidable as she-dragons. I was somewhat taken aback by her severe physiognomy; but calling

to my aid my most bland and conciliatory airs and most persuasive manner of address, I explained the purpose of my visit, and pleaded the cause of my client so effectually that she at last allowed the young lady, who entered all pale and trembling, to be introduced. In her name a positive refusal to see her disappointed lover was given, which she did not contradict; but she was permitted to receive the letter with which I was charged, which accordingly I placed in her hand, and with the best bow I could make took my leave. The barren issue of my diplomacy I reported to my friend, who was waiting at some little distance in a state of great anxiety. He was a fine young fellow, and I regretted in parting with him to think that I should most likely never see him again. But, we had our separate routes: the dreary and unhopeful prospect of my theatrical career lay before me, and he went on his way to leave probably his bones on some unrecorded battle-field in Bolivia or Peru.

At Rugby I met my brother Edward, who had conveyed our sisters there, and, leaving them on a visit with our friend and relation Birch, we took our places outside the coach for London. It seems very strange now to me, and I cannot well account for my improvidence, in remembering that we had not the price of our dinners in our pockets, and that we walked on before the coach, staying our hunger with biscuits, and keeping up our spirits by laughing at the straits to which we were reduced. I was indeed the general paymaster; but I have since been made sensible that the state of my affairs ought to have been very different. That great and important worldly lesson, the value of money, I had not been taught—certainly I had not learned: a lesson on which in after-life I have often most painfully reflected, the neglect of it having on many occasions prevented me from doing all I might have done, with the very abundant receipts so frequently at my command. A lifelong self-reproach is prepared for the youth who is not early indoctrinated in the principle and habits of a liberal economy. To restrict expenditure to the half of an income will make a man independent, to limit it to a third will make him rich: and where is the merit of generosity, or even charity, if not practised at the cost of some self-denial? The want of discretion in parting with my money was with me an early

fault too long uncorrected, and might have proved more prejudicial to me through life than it has done, but for two conservative principles that my father's continual reiteration had rooted in my mind: a dread of debt, and a horror of gaming.

On reaching London after a few days we found very good accommodation in a handsome first-floor at a boarding-house in Soho Square, kept by a Dr. Barber, the master of what still retained the name of Soho School. Here, with my brother as my guest, my salary left me a sufficient surplus, and I entered on my second London season. What were my feelings and my prospects? There was nothing bright in the prospect before me, and my spirits could not always bear up against the pressure on them. No gleam of promise appeared to me in the future to inspire my exertions, or to relieve what under such depression I felt to be the drudgery of my employment. My dissatisfaction with my position was not lessened by the species of character imposed on me in the beginning of this season. Indeed my pride was stung to the quick by a summons to the reading of a melodramatic after-piece, in which I was to appear. As I now look back on these earlier days I cannot but perceive how much I was the author of my own disquietude, what a world of annoyance I might have spared myself by calmly digesting these fancied indignities, regarding them as the trifles they really were. But "trifles light as air" are constantly magnified by the actor jealous of his reputation, and in consequence often unreasonably captious, into grave injustices. The piece was a translation by Reynolds, as bald and bad as it well could be. My mortification was great, but my rule held good "to do in the best manner whatever was to be done." Mr. Farley, the melodramatic director, wanted to teach me how to play the part, and I was obliged to let him understand that "if I did it, it must be in my own way." The melodrama was called 'The Father and his Children,' my part Dumont; and I had so far satisfaction in its performance, October the 25th (1817), that the applause and tears of the audience gave evidence of my ability to take higher ground than to be the exponent and apologist of such trash.

I now began seriously to meditate some mode of escape from this distasteful and unpromising pursuit, and exchange it for

one of greater utility, which would bring me more content. The only condition that could reconcile me to the profession I had adopted was to hold its highest walks, and from this present appearances seemed to debar me. There was at the same time little congeniality of taste or sentiment between the frequenters of the green-room and myself, the conversation there being generally of a puerile and uninteresting character, and not unfrequently objectionable on other grounds. I was impatient of my position, and a prey to uneasy and fretful apprehensions, unwisely "casting the fashion of uncertain evils," instead of resting my faith on the ultimate success of resolute endeavour. My wish was to make the trial of my talents in some other profession, and the Church offered me apparently facilities for the attempt. There was little or no doubt among my old schoolfellows that I could with ease take my degree at Oxford (a much less arduous ordeal then than now), and a friendly proposal to advance me the amount requisite for my residence there seemed to open the path directly for me. But much was to be taken into account, much to be calculated before I could commit myself to so weighty an obligation. In the meantime my duties had their claim upon me. On the occasion of Charles Kemble's illness the part of Romeo was sent to me, and the applause when the curtain fell was so enthusiastic, that Harris immediately announced me for its repetition on the following Monday. The fates were in this instance adverse; I was confined to my bed, and unable to appear.

My studies, in company with my brother, of my old school classics, and of English poetry, employed much of the leisure time that the theatre left me; and to Milton, Thomson, Pope, Dryden, and others, I now added the perusal of a poet whose works have ever since been constant companions of my idle hours. The common table, at which the boarders in the house, with our chance visitors, assembled, gave us some agreeable acquaintances. One evening's conversation fixed itself in my memory: the subject was Wordsworth, against whom the voices of all at table, except one, were upraised; and with the flippancy of youth and ignorance (for I had not read his poems) I joined in the depreciating chorus, objecting in the spirit of the *Edinburgh Review*, and quoting Byron's derisive lines in his

dispraise. The poet's champion, however (whose name was G——, and whose subsequent history was a most lamentable one), was not to be silenced by the arguments or vehemence of his opponents. He tried, but in vain, to recall the Sonnet on Westminster Bridge; he could do no more than describe it, repeating its last grand line—"And all this mighty heart is lying still!" The merit of this was disputed contemptuously by the rest of the party, but on me it made so deep an impression that I purchased the poet's works, and, reading them, was converted to an enthusiastic love of his writings, ever after being eager to acknowledge my gratitude to him for having made me in some respects a wiser, and excited in me the aspiration to become a better man.

On another evening the visitors of one of our boarders, a young clergyman recently ordained, dined with us. One of them, a gentle and melancholy-looking man, of very pleasing address, and with a mind of evidently a very superior stamp, was most engaging in the modesty with which he advanced his opinions: his name was Sleigh. The other was clownish in his build and deportment and brusque in his manners, overbearing and dogmatic to absolute rudeness in the superciliousness of his remarks and his apparent contempt for the understandings of those around him. He was reported to have just taken his senior wrangler's degree with unprecedented *éclat*, and quite answered to the idea of one whose world had been limited to the schools and quadrangles of his university. He has since deservedly attained the highest reputation, and is now the Master of Trinity.*

The usual dinner-party at Dr. Barber's, occasionally reinforced by the invited guests of the boarders, consisted of the Rev. E. Reed, Mr. Brabazon, an Irish gentleman, the Doctor and his son, another boarder whose name I forget, my brother, myself, and G——. The singular character and career of this man cannot well pass unnoticed. Possessed of an agreeable person, though with something of an Indian tinge in his complexion, an easy and self-confident address, that placed him at once on familiar terms with the generality of men, considerable tact, and unfailing readiness in conversation, he

* Dr. Whewell, late Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. He was in fact Second Wrangler in 1816.—Ed.

soon became popular with his acquaintance. He had read much, was a good speaker, extremely fluent, and, by dint of unscrupulous effrontery in making his assertions, made his reading tell for more than it was really worth. He was richly gifted, except in the great desideratum, principle. He pressed his intimacy on all, but I could never relax a certain degree of reserve towards him, though in unavoidably frequent communication with him. His story, as it subsequently became known, was a strange one:

He was a native of New York, where at the early age of fifteen or sixteen he had been convicted of forgery, and was working as a convict in the streets of his native city, where he was seen by Price, the manager of the Park Theatre. During the war with England he contrived to make his escape, and, landing in this country, he found at Plymouth a compassionate friend in a Mr. Ball, who afforded him refuge and hospitality, and after concealing him for some time, assisted him to evade the alien act, then in force, and reach London in safety. Here he procured employment as messenger on the *Statesman* newspaper, to which Mr. Burdon, a Northumberland gentleman of large fortune, was a frequent contributor. In his capacity of messenger, having one morning brought Mr. Burdon the proof sheet of a recent contribution, he was questioned by that gentleman on the authorship of an article in the paper that had particularly attracted his attention. To his great astonishment G—— informed him that the article in question was written by himself. Mr. Burdon, one of those romantic characters more frequently met with in fiction than in real life, adopted the youth into his family, and entered him at Trinity College, Cambridge, with a liberal allowance. But his wayward disposition counteracted the intentions of his benefactor. His extravagance obliged him to quit Trinity College for Emmanuel, and his haughty and insolent assumption in Mr. Burdon's house became intolerable to the family. Still, in pursuance of his wish to advance him in life, Mr. Burdon gave him a set of chambers in the Temple, with adequate means to continue his studies for the Bar. But he ceased to occupy them during the winter of 1817, and became a lodger and boarder at Dr. Barber's. It was here we became acquainted. He made many, and some very good, acquaintances, but his life

in London was a course of irregularities. His visits to gambling-houses, the hells of St. James's, were frequent, and often replenished his failing purse. For such a character he was extraordinarily communicative. One day, in an unusually grave mood, he abruptly addressed me: "Macready, my patron is dead. He sent for me yesterday, and I saw him in his bed. He told me he had left me one hundred pounds, and said, 'I hoped to have lived to have seen you a great and good man: I shall not live; and if I did, I should not see you either great or good.'"

With the £100 bequeathed to him, and with what else he could collect, G—— set out for Aix-la-Chapelle, where the Congress was then sitting. Here in two nights at the gaming-table he won £1900, with which he returned to England, and investing a portion in a purchase of books (soon afterwards sold), and placing the rest in a banker's hands, he set out on a tour through France, Germany, and Italy, returning in a few years without a sixpence, all his winnings having long since been engulfed in play. In London he led a precarious, dissipated, and discreditable life, writing occasionally for some obscure newspaper, and borrowing money of every one of his acquaintances, until he had completely exhausted the patience of all. I thus lost sight of him for some time, but his evil genius after some years brought him again under my notice.

On the 1st of January, 1818, a new tragedy was produced at Covent Garden. The author, John Dillon, a very young man, was the librarian of Dr. Simmons of Paddington, famous for a very splendid collection of valuable books. With great promise of dramatic power, as evinced in this his first essay, he wisely left the poet's "idle trade" for the more lucrative pursuits of commerce, and became partner in the well-known firm of Morrison, Dillon, and Co. His play was called 'Retribution,' the chief weight of which, in a very powerful character, Varanes, was on Young's shoulders. Miss O'Neill, Charles Kemble, Terry, and myself were his supporters, the villain of the story falling of course to me. It was acted nine nights, and tended to establish me more firmly in public opinion as the undisputed representative of the disagreeable; but I look back on it with pleasure, as the source of a friendship with one whose talents, however much entitled to respect, are surpassed in his general estimation and by higher and more endearing

qualities. It was on one of the nights of this play's performance that I had the mischance to break the large pier-glass in the green-room, in those days above £100 value. In swinging round a heavy battle-axe on my shoulder, as I was preparing to go on the stage, the metal head flew off, and, dashing against the glass, shivered it in every direction. It was quite a stirring event for the quidnuncs of the theatre, and it would have been an amusing sight, had it not been a heavy responsibility to myself, to see the rush of the players, male and female, into the green-room, when the act drop fell, to behold the wreck I had made. The fault was really the servant's, or property-man's, as he is called; but in the morning I wrote to Mr. Harris, expressing my readiness to undergo my liability for the accident. He behaved with great consideration and liberality, limiting my dues to only a proportion of the expense incurred in repairing the damage done.

My speculations on a change of life now came to a dead stop. The officers and privates of the first battalion of the 30th Regiment, who had been serving with the second previous to its being disbanded, received orders to join their corps in India. My brother's sole chance of rising in the service was by procuring an exchange to full pay, and accompanying his late comrades. For such an object there could be no hesitation in availing myself of the means within my reach; and accordingly I borrowed of my friend Jeston, who had offered me the loan for my proposed Oxford residence, the sum necessary to replace my brother in his old regiment. As it was only by my continuance on the stage that I could hope to repay it, all thoughts of venturing on any other calling were of necessity abandoned. The best arrangements we could make were soon in train, and with as good a kit (to use the military term) as our narrow finances would procure, my brother prepared for his voyage. After a hurried visit to Rugby, where he took leave of my sisters and our good friend Birch, leaving his heart behind him, he returned to town, and proceeded with me to Gravesend, where the good ship the *London*, a first-rate East-Indiaman, was lying off. Much had occurred since his return from the Continent, both in our family and elsewhere, to strengthen the ties of affection which from our early boyhood had always bound us, and he stood in relation to me now as the dearest friend I had

on earth. It was therefore with a heavy heart I went on board with him to see his berth and inspect his accommodations. Our evening, a very sad one, was spent on shore at the hotel, and the next morning, February 9th, with a few words we parted for an absence of many years, he to the ship, and I to my duties at Covent Garden Theatre.

Our mutual attachment had something of romance in its earnestness and devotedness, though differing relatively in each other so far, that he looked up to me for counsel and guidance in our companionship and correspondence. Admiration of many points in his character mingles with the love I bore him; and if I must admit occasional flaws on its even surface, they must for the most part be attributed to laws of conduct self-imposed and carried to extremes. He was of the very stuff to make a soldier: brave, resolute, clear-sighted, indefatigably industrious in all pertaining to his profession, and ambitious to a degree of weakness. Whatever he undertook he would master, at whatever cost of labour or endurance; in any competition he would be first: he was the boldest rider, the best horseman, the truest shot in his regiment; his reading was extensive; his judgment penetrating and clear; abstinent and self-denying in his personal gratifications, he was free and bounteous to others, and so guarded and circumspect, that I believe I may unhesitatingly say he never lost a friend. From all under whose notice he came—Lord Hill, Lord Hardinge, Sir Colquhoun Grant, and others—he received the highest encomiums. He was, in few words, a truly good man, and only wanted the opportunity to have been a great one.

My journey back to London was dreary and dispiriting, and my lodgings had a very desolate look as I now felt myself their lonely occupant. For my night-work at the theatre I had less zest than usual, as may readily be supposed, when this evening another of those unpalatable mixtures was given me to swallow, which caused me so much disgust, and which certainly prejudiced me in public opinion. But remonstrance would have been useless, and I could not now afford to pay the forfeit for non-compliance, therefore I went doggedly through the rehearsal of another of Reynolds's trashy melodramatic after-pieces, the 'Illustrious Traveller,' and in a despairing mood gave to its performance, February 3rd, all the support in my power. My spirits were

at the lowest ebb, and only derived respite from reflecting on my brother's happier destiny.

His voyage was a favourable one, chequered only by one serious accident. After passing the Cape the ship was discovered to be on fire, and on this occasion the steadiness and presence of mind exhibited by Edward called forth the warmest thanks of Captain Campbell, of whom he made a friend by his conduct. Unavoidable expenses in joining his regiment in India compelled him to incur serious debts. Against the friendly expostulation of his Colonel and others of the officers he absented himself for some months from the mess-table, till by a rigid and systematic economy he had freed himself from all his engagements, and stood unembarrassed before the world. I had reason to be proud of him and of the faith he held in me; which seemed unbounded. In the endeavour to save the life of a brother-officer, who was bathing with him in a tank in India, he very narrowly escaped drowning; and in his desperate struggle to reach the shore with his helpless companion, the thought that rushed across his mind with the prospect of death before him, was, in his own words, "I know William would approve what I am doing." I may truly apply the Psalmist's words to him: "My brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

The novel of 'Rob Roy' had been published in the previous December, and was immediately pounced upon by the playwrights of the theatres, of whom Pocock was first in the field. Mr. J. Soane had the title, but I fancy nothing more, to a piece which was at a later date produced in Drury Lane. Pocock's drama, called 'Rob Roy McGregor, or Auld Lang Syne,' was read in the green-room of Covent Garden at the latter end of February, and acted on the 12th of March (1818). Several of the prominent incidents are compacted together in this dramatic version in a sufficiently workmanlike manner, and, with the recollections from the novel to piece it out, the story, so far as Rob Roy is an agent, runs pleasantly on without any very perceptible hiatus or want of connection. Many popular Scotch airs were introduced, and, sung by Miss Stephens and Sinclair, added to the gratification of the audience, though the reader of the original work would lose in them all trace

beyond the names of the characters of Diana Vernon and Francis Osbaldistone. Liston in Baillie Jarvie was humorous in the extreme, Tokely in the Dougal Creature was a wonderful savage, and Blanchard was dry and precise as Mr. Owen himself. Rob Roy was cast to me, and, though not the lofty tragedy to which I aspired, was yet welcome to me for the humour, pathos, and passion that gleam throughout it and diversify its scenes, and for the rude heroism that elevates and gives something of a poetical character to the Highland cateran. I studied it from the original, and enjoyed my full share of the success the drama obtained.

The effect of the performance was soon felt by me in the manifest growth of public favour. Latterly there had been a disposition to identify my powers, which were not denied, with the representation only of the worst passions, and it was to this character I was first indebted for the opportunity of breaking the malignant charm that seemed to weigh upon me and contract my sphere of action. If what my eulogists called "my genius" could not yet "walk abroad in its own majesty," it could at least peep out, and give signs of something more akin to humanity than was believed of it. In the course of time some testimonies of the effect of this performance reached me, and I can well remember the stimulus my hopes received from the opinion expressed by a poet distinguished and popular as Barry Cornwall was, who, next year, published in the *Literary Gazette* the following 'Sonnet, written after seeing Mr. Macready in Rob Roy.'

"Macready, thou hast pleased me much: till now
(And yet I would not thy fine powers arraign)
I did not think thou hadst that livelier vein,
Nor that clear open spirit upon thy brow.
Come, I will crown thee with a poet's bough;
Mine is an humble branch: yet not in vain
Giv'n if the few I sing shall not disdain
To wear the little wreaths that I bestow.
There is a buoyant air, a passionate tone
That breathes about thee, and lights up thine eye
With fire and freedom; it becomes thee well.
It is the bursting of a good seed, sown
Beneath a cold and artificial sky—
'Tis genius overmastering its spell."

The sympathy this character awakened was still more strongly stamped upon my memory by a singular occurrence of a little later date, which may well find its place here. The post one morning brought me a letter, of which the following is a transcript:—

"SIR,—A person who witnessed on the evening of the 11th inst. your portraiture of the noble and romantic Scottish chieftain Rob Roy cannot withstand the impulse that leads him to transmit to you a few lines, which he would fain have you consider as the involuntary effect of unfeigned admiration of your powers, and not sent under the presumptuous pretension of being a tribute worthy of them.

"I am, Sir, yours,
"With much gratitude and admiration,
"C. D.

"*12th June.*

"SONNET

To Mr. Macready on seeing him at Covent Garden Theatre in the character of Rob Roy Macgregor Campbell.

"Macready, thou who know'st with magic art
To pierce the inmost chambers of the breast,
Frown not if Gratitude her thanks impart!
Thou with such skill Rob Roy didst manifest
As Sire, as Husband, and as high of heart,
That one whose brain was dry,—whose dearest rest
Was death's pale dwelling,—he hath felt it start,
Nature's first gush for years,—at thy behest.
May'st thou be happy! and this nameless thing,
Who not *commemorates*, but *thanks* thy powers
(Thou like Macgregor's self impassioning).
Oh, could Fate bring thee to his withered bowers,
Methinks youth's rose long sered once more would spring,
And flattering visions rise of happier hours."

It was not likely that an address in so grave a strain, bearing every semblance of truth and soberness in the description of the writer's mental suffering, should fail to touch me. My interest was excited, my curiosity aroused. How relief could be administered to a real ill by the mere "cunning of the scene" was a problem to me, and as months passed away I had ceased to expect any elucidation of the mystery; when a volume of poems was brought to me with a letter from the author, Charles Lloyd, recalling to me the sonnet addressed to me, and requesting my acceptance of the book just published. I was thus aware that it was the translator of Alfieri, the author of several original works, and the friend of Charles

Lamb, who had been my anonymous correspondent. A friendship, which lasted through his life, speedily grew out of the acquaintance which this compliment induced. I was a frequent visitor at his lodgings, spending many evenings in delightful intercourse with him and his most amiable and accomplished wife. Under his roof I first became acquainted with Lamb, and that sister to whom his brotherly devotion made his life one course of self-denying heroism. She was most intelligent and gentle in manners. Here, too, took place my introduction to Talfourd, who has so eloquently told the story of their woes. It was from Lloyd himself that I received the melancholy account of his sufferings. For upwards of four years he had been afflicted with a most extraordinary malady, a torpor of feeling, and, as it were, a numbness of his faculties, that all the medical advice to which he had resorted had been unable to relax or to dispel. He was impenetrable to the efforts of skill or the blandishments of affection. All intellectual pursuits had been discontinued, and, as his sonnet intimates, life itself had become wearisome. By some inexplicable chance he strayed one night, he scarce knew why, into the pit of Covent Garden Theatre, where the drama of 'Rob Roy' was being acted. He became absorbed in the interest of Scott's romantic story, and, in the scene where the outlawed chief dashes away the tears from his eyes, poor Lloyd felt his own fast trickling down his cheeks. The rock was struck, and the gushing stream was a new spring of life to him. So he felt it, and testified to me, as the instrument of his restoration, the most affectionate regard. But some lines of his own; extracted from a poem addressed to me some time after as "expressive of the gratitude of the author," will describe his previous state of mind and the revolution it underwent more faithfully than any words of mine:

"TO W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

"Whence is that unaccustomed gush, which steals
From eyes that so long in their sockets burned?
Whence, that a 'heart as dry as dust' now feels
That for which fruitlessly it long hath yearned?
The spell that wrought this miracle reveals
Most complete influence; in it are discerned
The visions of romance, and dear appeals
To dreams, from loftiest forms of thine, O Nature, learned!

"This potent spell was sped in its deep aim
By transcendental powers! and thus I wept
Tears, healing, yet impassioned; of whose name
Alone for years the memory I had kept.
From that day forth (oh! may the omen shame
Fear's ghastlier presentiments!) up-leaped
With natural yearnings, and with heart of flame,
The Muse from voiceless trance, in which she long had slept.

"Four years had slept on in unbroken trance—
New thoughts came o'er me, wishes, feelings new—
And Nature's scenes, which showed before my glance
Like ice-encrusted forms when with one hue
Winter o'er mount and moorland doth advance,
Beamed forth with healthier colours to my view,
And all assumed a kindlier countenance,
Light from new loopholes gleamed, and the cheered mind peeped through.

"Now, whom beneath the providence of heaven
(For as to anything, by men who own
A God above, can name of cause be given
To that not straightway issuing from His throne)
Must I call cause of this? The chain was riven
That numbed my heart-strings, by thy suasive tone,
Gifted Macready! May I be forgiven
Thus to thee rendering back with gratitude thine own?"

I heard with deep regret of his death some years after in Paris, whither he had removed, and where the cloud had again settled on his mind.

The favour with which my personation of Rob Roy was received revived my hopes and encouraged me to believe that with the patient resolve to "bide my time," that time would come, and the place I claimed would be accorded to me. The prospect of such an issue seemed to brighten before me with each new subject submitted to me. In my friend Sheil's tragedy of 'Balamira, or the Fall of Tunis,' produced April 22nd (1818) and supported by Young, Charles Kemble, Miss O'Neill, Terry, and myself, the character entrusted to me, Sinano, a Venetian noble turned renegade under the name of Amurath, was considered the most effective in the play. The *Morning Herald* made use, in criticising the performance, of the expression, "Mr. Macready in the part of Amurath has made a giant stride in his profession," and Sheil borrowed the phrase in the

acknowledgment of his obligations to the actors prefixed to the published work.*

About this time the affairs of my poor host, Dr. Barber, were so embarrassed that it became necessary to change my abode; and I prudently took less expensive lodgings in Foley Place, where out of my weekly salary I saved sufficient to discharge half my debt to Jeston before the end of the season, and before the summer's close I paid the remainder, accompanying the liquidation with a handsome piece of plate, in lieu of interest. It might have been expected that my professional successes would have procured me exemption from any further drudgery in melodramatic after-pieces, in which I felt my appearance a degradation; but the lees of the distasteful cup were to be drained in a piece called the 'Castle of Paluzzi, or the Extorted Oath,' May 27th (1818), founded on one of the *causes célèbres* which had lately been one of the current subjects of conversation, the murder of Fualdes, and the conviction of the assassins by the evidence of Madame Manson, "qu'un hasard fort extraordinaire avait rendu témoin du crime chez la femme Bancal," who kept a house of ill-fame. Terry had a part in the piece, and one night when, standing at the side-scene, I was inveighing against the taste and policy of compelling us to expend our talents on such rubbish, in his brusque way he ejaculated, "Why the d—— then do you take such pains for its success?" I had no answer to give. Having taken the part, it was due to the author, the management, and myself, to present it to the best advantage. The season was now approaching its close. Miss O'Neill selected for her benefit, June 2nd, Home's tragedy of 'Douglas,' in which, as Lady Randolph, she ventured unadvisedly on a character unsuited alike to her juvenile appearance and her style of acting. Charles Kemble acted Douglas very gallantly. Young was very good in Old Norval, and I had every reason to be satisfied with the revival of the play from the credit I obtained in the part of Glenalvon. For Young's benefit, June 5th, as

* *From the Times.*—"The characters are well sustained, and that of Amurath in particular is marked by some touches of scorn and hatred which display the hand of a master. Macready quite surpassed himself in the cool, remorseless villain regarding his victim with the smile of a demon; we could never have believed him so effective."

an especial favour, I acted Pizarro in Sheridan's version of Kotzebue's drama. Miss Booth's benefit, June 30th, gave me the part of Posthumus in 'Cymbeline,' which, as a Shakespearean character added to my list, was firm ground to me. Young was the Iachimo. In a review of the results of this season, which ended with the play of Rob Roy, July 16th, I could not be blind to the fact that my position was improved. It was incontestable that I had won upon opinion, both in the public voice and in the estimation of the manager and the actors; and regaining confidence in determination of will, and putting faith in the power of resolution, I looked more cheerily and hopefully into the future. "Possunt, quia posse videntur." *

* Things become possible when they seem to be possible.—ED.

CHAPTER XII.

1818–1819.—Keeley—Intercourse with other actors—Anecdote of Barry—Macready acting gratuitously for his father—Visit to a coal mine near Newcastle—London season—Michael Ducas in Lewis's 'Adelgitha'—Romani in 'Proof Presumptive'—Dumont in 'Jane Shore'—'Earl of Warwick'—Miss Somerville—Sheil's 'Evadne'—Father's difficulties renewed—Maturin's 'Fredolfo'—Condemned on first night—Mrs. Siddons's reappearance in Lady Randolph for Charles Kemble's benefit—Miss O'Neill's last performance in London—Edinburgh—Glasgow—Falls of the Clyde—Pedestrian tour in the Highlands —Professional study in a lunatic asylum—Swansea—Bristol.

From London I proceeded to Birmingham, where Elliston was lessee of the theatre, who paid me £100 for a week's performance. Mr. Keeley was a member of the company, and it was with pleasure I noted in him, young as he was, the humour and theatrical aptitude that have since been so universally and pleasantly recognised. It had always been in direct contrariety to my disposition and my taste, even in London, to adopt the "hail-fellow-well-met" familiarity of the green-rooms, into which (when I entered them, which was not often) I carried the manners and address habitual with me in general society. I am well aware this subjected me to unpopularity with very many in the profession, among whom I bore the character of being haughty and overbearing. On the occasion of this Birmingham engagement it was reported to me that the actors had come to an agreement to "cut" me whenever I should go into the green-room, and that Keeley had enjoyed their disappointment in the tables being turned by my never affording them the opportunity. There were other causes tending to alienate my fellow-labourers, among which was the zeal, probably sometimes outstripping discretion, which I carried into the pursuit of our art, at rehearsals requiring of

them a degree of accuracy and attention that they were perhaps too indolent, or indisposed, or sometimes unable to give. A better judgment would have made more allowance for them. There was some humour in the retort of a country actor of the name of Knipe to the famous Barry, who was, like myself, impatient of the incompetency of the players of the company. "Do not speak your speech, sir, in that drawling way," said Barry in his energetic manner; "look at me, sir; speak it in this way—'To ransom home revolted Mortimer!'—that's the way to speak it, sir." To which the actor immediately replied, "I know that, sir—that *is* the way; but you'll please to remember you get £100 a week for speaking it in your way, and I only get thirty shillings for mine! Give me £100, and I'll speak it your way; but I'm not going to do for thirty shillings what you get paid £100 for."

On the intimation from a mutual friend, Mr. W. Loraine, that a professional visit to my father might relieve his affairs from much embarrassment, I immediately made a very satisfactory arrangement to act for him gratuitously in Miss O'Neill's engagement, the ordinary receipts to be equally divided, her benefit to be entirely her own, and she to give her services on the night announced as mine. Expectation was fully answered, and my father was for the time set at ease; but one of his strange fits of caprice placed me in a very awkward predicament. I had readily consented to repeat for Miss O'Neill's benefit 'Rob Roy,' which I had acted as the second piece for my own, *i.e.* my father's benefit; without any shadow of pretence he interfered, and refused his permission. It availed nothing that I overruled his prohibition: Miss O'Neill very naturally declined to take the piece. A brief and courteous correspondence with Mr. R. O'Neill exonerated me from all participation in the discourtesy, and we happily parted on the best understanding.

Some idle days on my hands were given to sightseeing. The old castle, Sunderland Iron Bridge, &c., were interesting, but the chief object of my curiosity, when in the North, had always been the working of a coal-mine. I had a letter to the manager or head-man of a mine: the name does not remain with me, but it was the deepest but one in the whole coal region. Loder, a violinist of great note in his day (there had been no Paganinis, Vieux Temps, Ole Bulls, or Winiawskis

then), was dining with my father, and, hearing my intention, expressed his wish to accompany me the next morning. Accordingly at the appointed hour next day a chaise took us to the little hamlet at the pit's mouth, about six or seven miles from Newcastle. Arrived there, the manager receiving us very civilly, informed us that we must put on miners' dresses. This was not a very agreeable introduction, but we at once understood its necessity, and there we were two complete miners, save and except the want of smudge upon our faces, which however we did not long wait for. A stout, elderly, steady-looking man was directed to be our guide. The basket was pulled to the pit's mouth, and I must confess to a flutter of the heart when I saw the craft in which we were to make our downward voyage, feeling, like Acres, very much inclined to "run;" but casting a look on my companion, and seeing his face as pale as ashes, restored my courage, and with a hearty laugh I got into one side of the basket, whilst he slowly took his place in the other: our guide slung his thigh into the noose of a chain, and the steam-engine began to lower us down at half-rate pace, which seemed to me what might be better termed "double-quick time."

Once or twice in our downward course I looked up aloft, when the aperture through which we had emerged appeared like "a star of smallest magnitude," and our guide, when we had made what seemed a great distance of depth, kept constantly striking against the wall of the shaft the particular sort of rough stick he carried. I was wondering what his object could be, perceiving there was some significance in the action, when he enlightened us not very agreeably with the exclamation, "Now then I'll tell ye, when we get half-way doon." It was with a suppressed groan I learned that we were still dangling at such an awful distance from the bottom. But the deepest shaft, like the longest day, will have an end; we reached a solid footing at last, and extricating ourselves from our basket, sat down in a scooped-out recess to "get our sight," as our guide, who was providing himself with a light, directed us before setting out on our tour through this gnome's world of wonders.

A world it seemed to be from the activity pervading it. There were horses with long trains of creels of coal, and

their drivers; a steam-engine at work; a pond for the horses to wash in. But a partial view was all we could obtain in the darkness visible by the help of our conductor's lamp. We traversed gallery after gallery, sometimes more than six feet in height; at other times we were obliged to walk in a stooping posture. At given distances through the galleries there were trap-doors, with pulleys and weights, to ensure a frequent circulation of air; under an open shaft was an immense roaring fire, kept up, like the great *lung* of the excavation, for a continual draught of pure air from above. It particularly surprised me to see the process of blasting a huge mass of coal detached, which the miners, naked to their waists, vigorously broke up and deposited in the creels. The air was very thick and close, and heavy on the breath; but the particular oppression I experienced was in the sensation of my ears. In one compartment, as the trap-door shut after and enclosed us, our guide stopped us, and, apparently with great relish, said, "Now I'll show you something;" then lighting a match at his lamp, he raised it to the top of the seam, and igniting the gas or fire-damp, in an instant the roof was all on flame. For the uninitiated it was a very nervous minute. "Thank you," said I, "that will do." "Oh, there's no danger," returned he; "d'ye think I'd have lighted it if I did not well know?" "I have no doubt," I continued, "but we're perfectly satisfied;" upon which, half grumbling at the effect of his pyrotechnic display, he continued, "Oh, I'll put it out in a minute, ye'll see," and beating the ceiling with his hat, he very soon extinguished every trace of fire. We were some hours below, for our slow walk was one of miles, and at the extreme point of our progress our guide informed us that "we were just under the middle of the Tyne." In some places the heat was very great, and the perspiration flowed profusely down our blackened faces. We were glad to have seen what was to me a wonderful sight, but at the same time it was not the least part of our enjoyment to take in a good draught of the fresh air of heaven, and to find ourselves standing again on the outside of the earthy crust. After a hearty laugh at the figures we presented to each other, we took the benefit of the cold water set for us, exchanged our miners' suits for our own apparel, and, recompensing our conductor, got merrily into our chaise for our return to Newcastle.

The anecdote will recur to many of Sheridan's expostulations with his son Tom, when at Newcastle, on his wish to make a descent into one of these mines, and Tom giving as a clenching reason for persisting in his purpose, "Well, father, I should like to say I had been down a coal mine," and Sheridan's rejoinder, "Well then, Tom, why can't you say so?" I have not yet discovered any particular gratification in saying I have been down a mine, but the sight was one I would not have missed, nor would I willingly part with the recollection of it. My previous ideas of these wonderful exenterations of the earth had been wild and fanciful in the extreme. I had expected to find an immense concave vault, that might have suggested a Hall of Eblis, or lofty area, extending beyond the reach of sight; but I found myself threading low galleries, that suggested in magnified proportions the passages in an ant-hill. Vast pillars of coal were left by the miners and wooden props as supports to the vacant spaces, from whence the coal had been taken, in order, I believe, to prevent or render more gradual the subsidence of the masses above.

On reaching London for the approaching season, I found that the Drury Lane committee had been led from ill-success to reduce their prices, whilst Covent Garden opened, September the 7th (1818), under most favourable auspices, receiving a powerful addition to its great comic strength in the engagement of Mr. W. Farren, an actor deservedly admired for his studious correctness and the passion of his comedies, though eclipsed by Munden and Dowton in the rich quality of humour. I settled myself in a commodious first floor in Berners Street, and for the first three or four weeks the success of Farren's plays, which were strongly cast, gave me many leisure evenings, which, however, were not allowed to be idle ones. I had before me a most repulsive character, against which I had vehemently protested, but as usual in vain. This was Michael Ducas in Mr. Lewis's tragedy of 'Adelgitha.' In acting Lothair, the juvenile hero of the play, I had won golden opinions; which made it a peculiar hardship that I should now be forced to represent the old bombastic tyrant, the butt against which all the indignant sentiments and sarcasms of the other parts were levelled. Fawcett's reply to my complainings was not without its good effect, "Why, William, you grumble at every

part that is given you, and you succeed in them all! Set to work at this, and, though it is rather an odious gentleman, you may make something of him by hard study." I did give especial pains to it, investing it with a dignity of manner that enforced respect, and with a concentrated energy that made the scenes in which I appeared completely my own. The truth had become manifest to me, that, as passion is weakness, the real sense of power is best expressed by a collected and calm demeanour. Indeed from this performance I date an elevation of style and a sensible improvement in my acting, of which I felt before my audiences the general recognition. Miss Somerville, *alias* Mrs. Bunn, was the Adelgitha, not eliciting any particular approval, indeed rather causing disappointment from the injudicious puffery that had heralded her appearance. She had the advantage of a commanding person, and some force in declamation, but her talents were not of a first order. Young was not equal to himself in Guiscard, a part he did not like, and Charles Kemble made no great effect in Lothair. For myself the part was a great step in public opinion.* A sort of serious drama in three acts, called 'Proof Presumptive,' translated from the French by Charles Kemble (to which I offered no objection, because it was his), was acted only three nights; but the part, named Romani, afforded me opportunities which I did not neglect.†

The chronicle of my progress is but a monotonous repetition of adventure in new characters, and generally with similar results. Through an industrious circulation of newspapers, notices, and paragraphs in laudation of Miss Somerville, a temporary excitement had been raised by the announcement of her appearance in a play with Miss O'Neill. Between these actresses there was no approach to comparison. One was a genius, great in her art, the other respectable. But curiosity was piqued. The play of 'Jane Shore,' November 10th, was powerfully cast, and, with Miss O'Neill as the heroine and Miss

* *From the Times.*—"The character of Michael Ducas found a most able representative in Mr. Macready. There are few performers on the stage who produce so much effect without any apparent effort as this gentleman."

† *From the Times.*—"Mr. Macready gave some very fine traits of the discerning actor in the part of Romani; he yields to no one in the delineation of the cool and crafty, yet bold and determined villain."

Somerville as Alicia, supported by Young as Hastings, Booth as Gloster, and myself as Dumont, filled the theatre for thirteen or fourteen nights. Praise was lavishly bestowed and rightfully awarded to the performances of Miss O'Neill, and young Miss Somerville was what might be considered an average representative of Alicia; but Booth was so ineffective that he quitted the theatre after the first night, and Egerton filled his place. Good fortune attended me in the part of Dumont, to which I bent my best endeavours.* Nor was I less favoured in the criticisms passed on my representation of the Earl of Warwick in the tragedy of that name†—which was revived for the purpose of affording another trial to Miss Somerville, in the part of Margaret of Anjou. This was one of the characters in which Mrs. Siddons, by the grandeur of her deportment, the truth and intensity of her passion, presented a poetic image, an historical ideal, that far transcended the author's conception. Miss Somerville declaimed the part as other actresses have done, but left no particular impression of its power. This lady's appearance in London was attended with an unpleasant demonstration of the actors' disapproval of her husband's proceedings. A weekly theatrical paper had been started in praise of Miss Somerville and in depreciation of Miss O'Neill, by a bookseller, Harris, whose shop in Bow Street was opposite to the theatre. It was very soon ascertained that Mr. Bunn had set it on foot, and was its sole editor. As the husband of Miss Somerville he had been allowed the *entrée* of the green-room; but on this discovery Mr. Fawcett, the stage-manager, upon the indignant representation of the performers, gave him to understand, with some very severe comments on the affair, that his presence in the green-room was disagreeable to the ladies and gentlemen who frequented it, and could no longer be permitted. Upon which Mr. Bunn very penitently promised to stop the publication of the abusive journal, and his strictures on the performances were for a time

* *From the Times*—"To complete the catalogue of first-rate performers, we had Mr. Macready in the part of Dumont. The character probably never had before so excellent a representative."

† *From the Morning Herald.*—"It was one of the finest performances we have seen. Mr. Macready has the art which so few besides possess, and which is the perfection of declamation, that of giving the language of the part the air of being unpremeditated."

discontinued. The paper after three or four numbers was heard of no more.

My London career now became a regularly progressive one, the characters allotted to me bringing me generally an increase of favour, as I grew in confidence of my audience and of my own powers. In the month of February Sheil produced his tragedy of 'Evadne.' Gifford, the author of the 'Baviad' and 'Mæviad,' and editor of the *Anti-Jacobin* and the *Quarterly Review*, had met him at Murray's, and given him the proof-sheets of Shirley's 'Traitor,' as he was preparing the edition of that author's works for the press, observing at the same time how little was needed to adapt it for representation. Sheil was delighted with the work; he read it to me, and expressed himself particularly gratified in the opportunity of putting such a part as Ludovico in my hands, and very speedily, with some considerable and most judicious alterations, sent in the play to Mr. Harris. Harris's observations were to the effect that "an altered play never had the attraction of an original one, and that the dramatist who could write such a scene as that of 'the statues' in the third act, ought to make the whole play his own." Accordingly the play of 'Evadne, or the Statue,' was duly prepared and put into rehearsal. Its effect in representation, February 10th (1819), was very great. Miss O'Neill was the Evadne, in all the charm, the tenderness, and the power of the character; Young as Colonna, the brother, and Charles Kemble as Vicentio, the lover, were both at home in their several parts, and Ludovico proved another stepping-stone for myself.*

My father's difficulties meantime had thickened around him: he had lost the Newcastle Theatre, his main dependence, and had opened a negotiation for the lease of that at Bristol. But the funds required to leave his old abode and enter on a new speculation were wanting. These were supplied by the contributions of our relations, the Birches, and myself. My two sisters, who up to this time had lived with our father,

* *From the Times.*—"Macready proved himself, as he never fails to do, the accomplished actor; we were much struck by a passage in the first act, where, after he has been practising the greatest adulation and meanness, to divert the attention of the king from his revealed treason, he assumes, on his departure, a manly attitude and gesticulation, in the finest contrast with his previous servility."

now took the independent resolution, in order to relieve him from the expense of their maintenance, of going out as governesses. I was strongly opposed to their plan, wishing them to share my home; but they were firm in their determination, and were supported in it by our relations' and friends' opinions. Fortunately I was able to avail myself of some vacant nights at Covent Garden to engage Terry, and, taking him down with me to Bristol, we presented a very imposing bill of fare for the inauguration of my father's new enterprise, by acting together for him the three first nights of his season, beginning with Easter Monday. This was a good start for him, and he was able to maintain his position in that city with general respect and in comfortable circumstances for the remainder of his life.

The green-room news on our return to London was the acceptance by the Covent Garden managers of a tragedy by Maturin, the success of whose previous works, 'Bertram,' 'Manuel,' &c., gave pungency to the curiosity such an announcement excited. In these there was evidence of great power, passion, and poetry; and only originality of invention was wanting to justify the award of genius to the author's clever combinations. But in his novels, as in his dramatic efforts, he seems to have been under the magnetic influence of what he approved or admired in others, which with an irresistible force drew him, I believe unconsciously, into imitation. With sundry properties of genius he yet was deficient in its primary element, patience—the confidence to wait for the birth and maturity of his own conceptions. His play of 'Fredolfo,' perhaps the least to be commended of all his works, supported by the Covent Garden company, could not fail of full justice from a cast including Miss O'Neill, Young, Charles Kemble, &c. But opinion was unanimous in the green-room on its fate. Of the characters, three of them were villains—the three degrees of comparison, bad, worse, worst. Young was Fredolfo, the positive; Yates the comparative, Berthold; and to me was committed the superlative, Wallenberg,—a very voluptuary in villany, whom it was not possible the taste of any audience could tolerate. Mr. Alaric Watts was the friend to whom the supervision of the rehearsals and the care of the author's interests were entrusted, and he was as confident in

the triumph of the tragedy, as all the actors were of its damnation.

Its production was so long retarded, though all concerned were perfect in their parts, by the severe illness of Young, that the managers were driven, after three weeks' delay, to the decisive step of altering the cast. I was desired to prepare myself in Fredolfo, a very long part; that of Wallenberg was sent to Terry; and the play was to be represented, *coute qui coute*, on that day (Saturday) week. I acted Pierre in 'Venice Preserved' on the night the change was made, and the next morning was early up and at work on Fredolfo. The play was rehearsed on Monday, and Mr. Harris went on the stage in some anxiety to inquire of McCulloch, the prompter, how the rehearsal had "gone off." His first question was: "Did Macready know anything of Fredolfo?" "He was perfect in every line of it," was McCulloch's answer. "And Terry in Wallenberg?" added Harris. "Did not know a word of it," rejoined McCulloch. Terry was a very clever actor, with a remarkably quick study, to which he always trusted, generally rehearsing with his book in his hand till the morning of the play's performance. My system on the contrary, as I have before observed, was to pluck out all the advantage that could be derived from every opportunity of practice. Young rose from his sick bed, and the original cast was maintained. The play passed (May 12th, 1819) with little applause and occasional disapprobation to the last scene, the interior of a cathedral, at the altar of which Wallenberg had secured Urilda (Miss O'Neill), and threatened Adelmar, her lover (Charles Kemble), who with his band had burst in to her rescue, with her instant death unless he surrendered his sword. In the agony of his despair Adelmar on his knees gave his weapon into the hands of Wallenberg, who plunged it directly into his bosom, upon which the pit got up with a perfect yell of indignation, such as, I fancy, was never before heard in a theatre. Not another syllable was audible. The curtain fell in a tumult of opposition, and 'Fredolfo' was never acted again.

The approaching close of the season was intimated by the notice of the performers' benefits, and frequent messages were sent to me from the box-office, reporting inquiries there, whether it was my intention to take a night, and intimating

that if I would act Richard III. I might calculate on a crowded house. But although I was sensible of my growth in public favour, I hesitated to set on such a venture the vantage-ground I had gained. Between Young and myself there was something of a feeling of rivalry, which, however, did not interfere with the courtesy that, although distant, was always maintained between us. I made it a point to oblige him on the occasion of his benefits, and this year studied for him, in 'Julius Cæsar,' the "lean and wrinkled Cassius," a part in the representation of which I have through my professional life taken peculiar pleasure, as one among Shakespeare's most perfect specimens of idiosyncrasy.

The theatres, no less than the public, were taken by surprise upon the advertisement of Charles Kemble's benefit. The Queen of Tragedy, Mrs. Siddons, had consented to appear once again upon the stage! To those who had enjoyed the privilege in former days of appreciating the displays of her transcendent genius, and who, in her performance of Lady Macbeth in 1817, had been regretful witnesses of the total decline of her physical powers, the announcement was an unwelcome one. Her admirers, jealous of her fame, felt it an injustice to herself, and blamed Charles Kemble for soliciting the sacrifice from her. His purpose was, however, fully answered by the thronged attendance of all ranks to get a parting sight of the greatest actress of her own or perhaps of any time. The play was 'Douglas.' How ineffaceably impressed on my memory was her matchless personation of the widowed mother seven years before! I then was the young Norval, now Charles Kemble's character. Young retained old Norval, and Glenalvon remained of course with me. Mrs. Siddons appeared June 9th, "for that night only," as Lady Randolph. On her former reappearance as Lady Macbeth there had not been one salient point to break the sombre level of the unimpassioned recitation. On this night there was a gleam of the "original brightness," in which many like myself no doubt rejoiced, as calculated to afford to those who had not known her days of triumph some slight glimpse of the grand simplicity and force of her style. When, as Glenalvon, I stood intently riveting my gaze upon her, as she uttered her threatening caution regarding Norval, she paused;

then fixing her eyes sternly upon me, in a tone of insulted dignity and with a commanding air, continued:

> "Thou look'st at me as if thou fain would'st pry
> Into my heart,"

concluding with the majestic confidence of truth:

> "'Tis open as my speech."

The effect was electric, and the house responded with peals of applause. But this was as the last flicker of the dying flame; no flash enlightened the succeeding scenes. Her powers were no longer equal to those bursts of passion in which, with unrivalled skill, she had formerly swayed at will the feelings of her audience. Those who have only known the painting of Guido in the faint and watery colourings of his pencil's later productions (characterised by *cognoscenti* as his "feeble manner"), could scarcely give the artist credit for such works as the Martyrdom of St. Peter, the Aurora, the Madonna at Bologna, and other marvels of his art, which won him renown in his earlier and happier day. Still less could they who had been present at no other performance of Mrs. Siddons than these two last attempts have formed any idea of the matchless fidelity with which the passions of our nature could be portrayed, or have remotely conceived the point of sublimity to which her wonderful powers of expression could raise the poet's thought. In no other theatrical artist were, I believe, the charms of voice, the graces of personal beauty, and the gifts of genius ever so grandly and harmoniously combined.

The close of this season was rendered further memorable by the disappearance of another "bright particular star," indeed one of the brightest that ever glittered in the theatrical firmament. On the evening of July 13th (1819) Miss O'Neill acted Mrs. Haller in 'The Stranger,' announced in the playbills as "her last performance before Christmas." It was her last performance in London. Before Christmas she had exchanged the public triumphs of her laborious art for the tranquil felicity of domestic life by her union with Sir William Wrixon Becher, Bart., M.P. for Mallow. With endowments of genius that placed her on the very loftiest pinnacle of her profession, she was gifted with virtues and native graces that would have adorned and shed lustre on the highest rank. Like the star of

Hipparchus, she had suddenly shone out to the surprise and wonder of all beholders, and, after a brief display of her glory, as suddenly and silently had vanished from their sight.

My course for the summer lay northward, and, leaving my sister Letitia to visit her Newcastle friends, I went onwards to my engagement at Edinburgh, which did little more than cover my expenses. But these mischances, when they occurred, seldom gave much disturbance to my philosophy, and in a note I made at the time of this visit I remark, "In warm and enthusiastic approbation no place to me ever was more kind. The fervour of those who came to see me" (and, if I remember rightly, the authors of 'Essays on Taste' and the 'Man of Feeling' were conspicuous among them) "almost recompensed me for the absence of those who stayed away." My chief cause of regret in leaving that beautiful and interesting city was my inability to present the letters of introduction with which I had been furnished to Sir Walter Scott, who at that time was confined to his bed by a serious and, it was feared, a dangerous illness. Happily he lived to swell still further the amount of his contributions to the world's entertainment and instruction; but the expectations I had fondly cherished of making his acquaintance were for once and all disappointed. Another introduction was scarcely more fortunate. My good old friend Birch, who never missed an occasion of serving me, had sent me a letter to Dr. Hamilton, a physician in high practice, to whose son he had shown great kindness at Rugby. The letter I left with my card at the Doctor's house. The only notice given of its delivery was a guinea sent for a box-ticket on the day of my benefit, which I immediately enclosed in a note, to the effect that in wishing to give me the pleasure of Dr. Hamilton's acquaintance, my relative and friend could have had no intention of laying a tax on his liberality; that it was not my practice to receive presents on my benefit-nights; and with due acknowledgments of his courtesy, I begged to return his enclosure. He called on me the next day, but I had left Edinburgh, and his card was sent after me. A few performances at Glasgow somewhat improved the state of my finances, and three idle weeks were now before me, which I thought could not be laid out to better advantage than in visiting the romantic scenery which in this "land of the mountain and the flood" invited me on every side. My first

excursion was to the Falls of Clyde, and the grand and picturesque ravine of Cartland Craigs. The cascades of Stonebyres and Bonnington would not have recompensed me for the fatigue of my walk, but that of Corra Linn may vie in picturesque effect with many of greater volume and altitude, and justifies the magnificent apostrophe of Wordsworth's noble ode, "Lord of the vale! Astounding flood!" blending as it does the grand with the beautiful in happiest union.

At that time steamboats were few and railroads unknown. The Highlands were consequently less accessible than they now are, and the solitudes of wild and romantic scenery were comparatively rarely invaded by the parties of pleasure and tourists that now crowd to them in the summer season. Now on the sites of shielings where I was glad to find oatcake and whisky, there are spacious hotels, with champagne, fancy breads, and every luxury, and the pleasure of "roughing it" (to young people adding so much zest to their enjoyment) has disappeared before the comforts of civilisation. There was, however, then a steamboat that made its weekly run from Glasgow to the head of Loch Fine, and in this, a bright summer morning giving me splendid views, along the expanding Clyde, of Dumbarton, the Kyles of Bute, Rothsay, and the distant hills, I reached at sunset the town of Inverary.

Here my pedestrian tour began; and from hence my route lay to Portsonochan on Loch Awe, across Lakes Etive and Creran in sight of Ben Cruachan—to Ballahulish on Loch Leven—through the sternly-wild and sublime pass of Glencoe, by King's House—and Inveronan to Tyndrum, each day's journey varying in detail the grandeur and beauty of the scenes through which I passed. As I told a friend, I really felt on the banks of Loch Leven, "Had I been born here, I should have been a poet." Such scenes must inspire lofty thoughts, and feed the mind with images of the purest beauty, of which they who keep their eyes upon the level of the crowded street can seldom or ever dream. It is with an inward delight and glorying that in gazing on Nature's splendours we sympathise with Wordsworth's emotions, and feel ourselves, they

> "Have no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye."

The only approach to an adventure, if I may call it so, that diversified the even tenor of my way, was owing to my deviation from the ordinary track of road. My old guide from Tyndrum promised to take me by a "short cut, just about eighteen miles and a bittock," over the Braes of Balquhidder to the west end of Loch Katrine: Loch Katrine, the goal of my expedition, the object of my most ardent wishes. We started in excellent spirits, and got over the level road at a gallant pace; but what might have been "eighteen miles and a bittock" in a champaign country was more than doubled in fatigue when the retardations of swamp, rushes, and high heather up these toilsome braes are taken into account. I saw, however, much to interest me in this wearying walk. A battle-field was pointed out to me by my guide, but all my searching inquiries could gain from him no more than that the MacNabs suffered greatly there. Continuing our walk by a small river's side, we came to a deep hole in a little bend of the stream, where he informed me the "wud folk were dookit." I could not at first understand him, but made out at last that it was sacred to St. Fillan, and that after the insane persons were immersed, or, in his own phrase, "dookit," there, the superstition required that each of them should add a stone to the large round heap which I observed on the low cliff above the water's edge. It then occurred at once to me that this was one of those places of pilgrimage alluded to by the Palmer in 'Marmion' as

> "St. Fillan's blessed well,
> Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
> And the crazed brain restore."

In the dreariest waste of the braes, where there was neither pathway nor track, and where all looked as if the foot of man had never broken on its silence, to my great surprise I came upon a tumulus with four large stones fronting each other at its base, answering to the description of a chieftain's tomb in Ossian. These monuments carry us back into the world of conjecture, where "all that we know is, nothing can be known."

I could have willingly rested here some time; but the day was advancing, and it was necessary to wend on our way "over hill, over dale, through bog, through briar;" and as the sun was pouring down his hottest beams, and the "short cut" seemed to lengthen itself out interminably, my patience began to give

way. Indeed I chafed as much from ill-humour (to my discredit be it confessed) as from the broiling heat. A spectator would have been amused to have seen the wrathful glances I cast at my good-natured old guide, as every now and then he would turn round to me with a complacent grin, and, wiping with his hand the perspiration streaming from his forehead, ejaculate—"Oh! it's pleasant!" I am afraid I received his observations very ungraciously, his "short cut" being the most laborious journey I had ever taken, and feeling myself completely "done up" by it. But the longest road has an end, and there is a summit to Balquhidder, which at length we reached, and oh, what a burst of beauty on my sight was there! The sun was not yet below the hills, and under its sloping rays Loch Katrine lay before me like a sheet of molten gold in a framework of mountain, wood, rock, and shrub, intermingled and disposed as if in one of Nature's happiest moments of design. The effect of this glorious view upon me was most extraordinary; wine could not have produced such instantaneous and wonderful exhilaration: I was really enraptured by it:

> "Sound needed none,
> Nor any voice of joy; my spirit drank
> The spectacle."

After gazing a few minutes in transport on the gorgeous splendour of the scene, I bounded down the long hill-side in the wildest effervescence of spirits, all annoyance and fatigue forgotten as if it had never been, and at the bottom vaulting over a gate, that opened into an enclosure in front of a substantial-looking farmhouse, was accosted in rather a surly tone by a farmer-looking man—"What's your wull?" To my explanation that I had had a long day's walk, and would be obliged to him for a night's shelter, for which I would willingly make any remuneration, he very brusquely informed me that at the other end of the lake there was "a *public*," and that he "had no room for me." I begged for the accommodation even of a barn, but he was inexorable; "for the loan of a boat?" His brief answer was, that about half a mile off there was "a cottager who kept a boat;" and with this, returning to his house, he shut the door in a sufficiently intelligible manner.

My guide had now made his way down the hill, and rejoined

me, observing, "Eh, sir, ye're no that tired noo, I see!" He informed me that the place was called Portnellan, and that the churlish laird's name was Graham. But there was no time to lose, and we made at once for the boatman's cottage. Arrived there, the boat, at no great distance, with two men in it, was hailed, and a bargain made with them to take me to the other end of the Loch. Having paid and parted with my guide, we went briskly on our way up the lake. The evening shades were falling fast when we had rowed about four miles, and, being still damp after my profuse perspiration, I felt quite chilled by the cold air of the lake. My feet were numbed, and finding myself unequal to further exertion, I desired the men to pull to the left-hand shore, where up the high sloping bank I saw a sort of one-storied cottage-building of two or three rooms. As I approached it four or five dogs came out, and with their furious barking kept me at bay, till the owner, a stout-looking peasant, about thirty years old, appeared, and driving them away, inquired my business. This was soon told; I was wearied out, and if he could give me shelter for the night, a sheaf of straw and a crust of bread, I would pay him handsomely. "Oh," he replied, "you Southern gentlemen think a poor Highlander can't give you a bed; but you shall have a bed, and blankets too, and sheets too, whichever you like best: walk in, sir." The boatmen were appointed to call for me next morning, and most thankfully did I follow my kind host into his lowly, hospitable abode.

He led me into an inner room, evidently the parlour of the rustic dwelling; the walls were in some places plastered, but in others the rough stones of the wall were left bare. Making up a good peat fire on the open hearth, and helping me to pull off my soaked boots, he seemed intent on doing his best for my comfort; but when I asked him, feeling dreadfully chilled, if he could oblige me with a glass of whisky, he made no answer, and I perceived a disinclination to comply with my request. Did he suspect me to be a branch of the excise on a detective errand? At length, after about a quarter of an hour's conversation on sundry matters, he went out and returned with a bottle, from which he poured me a bumper of the cordial beverage—a nectarean draught to my chilly frame—real mountain dew. After some time a servant

lassie laid a clean cloth, spoons, knives, and soup-plates on the table; and whilst I was wondering, with the fear of a haggis present to me, what our supper was to consist of, a large basin covered over was brought in, which to my great contentment proved full of mashed potatos, prepared *à merveille.* This, with rich new milk poured over it, gave me a supper, the relish of which I can well remember. Cheese and oatcake, with whisky-toddy, crowned the delicious repast. My good host showed me into a little room adjoining, that measured about six feet by eight, on one side of which was a bed with clean coarse sheets, and a basin and towel perfectly convenient. The sky showing itself through some breaks in the roof, tended perhaps a little to prolong my musings, but did not otherwise interfere with a good night's rest. The very peculiarity and novelty of the circumstances and the situation added to my enjoyment.

Next morning early, wrapped in my cloak and only partially dressed, I was passing out of the door, when my host bade me good morning, and inquired where I was going. I told him to bathe in the lake. The water of the lake was too cold, he said, and asked, "Can you swim?" Having satisfied him on that head, he directed me to take the path along the field to my left, which would bring me to "the burnie that runs into the Loch," where I should find a convenient place to bathe. Following the path, I soon came within sound of the rushing stream, which, shrouded in a deep cleft, was pouring over its rocky bed down the long steep slope of the hill. The place I reached, descending to the water's brink, was subject for a painter's pencil or a poet's pen. The burn, that in its downward course had been rushing over and between the rocks with noisy violence, welled in this hollow, as if for a temporary rest, into a round, silent pool, about fourteen or fifteen yards across, of such transparent clearness as made it appear of inconsiderable depth, showing every stone and weed beneath its surface. The rocks at either side looked as if prepared by the kind genius of the place as seats and tables for a Naiad's toilet, whilst the thick, overhanging foliage screened it from every passing sight. It was a most enchanting scene. The water was very deep, and the glow I felt after a good swim in it was most delightful. I have never forgotten the Naiad's grotto, for such it might appropriately

be called. After a capital breakfast on tea, oatcake, eggs, and mutton-ham, the boatmen appeared, and I took a grateful leave of my hospitable Highlander, with the utmost difficulty compelling him to accept a token of my obligation to him. His deliberate manner, sound good sense, and ready and conscientious kindness gave me an admirable specimen of Scotch character.

We rowed merrily up the lake, visiting the island, the Goblin's Cave, and every spot that Scott's poetry has invested with a never-dying interest. Passing through the Trosachs, my onward walk in company of a guide was to Aberfoyle, and thence along the banks of Loch Ard, over the shoulder of Ben Lomond to a very snug inn at Rowardinnan, on the shores of Loch Lomond. The next day gave me in a steamboat the tour of the lake as high as Rob Roy's Cave, and the night found me comfortably housed in my hotel at Glasgow. Desirous of turning to the best account my short stay here, I made the round, with my friend John Tait, of the objects most worthy of attention. The beautiful crypt of St. Mungo's Cathedral—the most beautiful and picturesque I have ever seen—I never fail to revisit when staying in this noble city. The college, with its Hunterian Museum, the scenes associated with Scott's 'Rob Roy,' the Tolbooth, the Salt Market (to whose dirty extent faith in the great novelist's relation lent interest as the residence of Baillie Jarvie), came within our tour.

But uppermost in my mind was always the cultivation of my art, and as the aim and object of all true art is the skilful blending of the real and the ideal, it becomes the student's study to store his mind abundantly with facts, at the same time that he gives free scope to the exercise of his imagination. Whatever, therefore, might extend my experience of the various aspects human nature may put on in the vicissitudes of pain and pleasure, suffering or enjoyment, I regarded as a needful and imperative study. Under this persuasion it was that I braced up my nerves (always acutely sensitive to a sight of suffering) to go through the lunatic asylum. The superintendent was a very intelligent person, whose conduct of the establishment had gained him great credit; he was most courteous; and in directing my attention to the several peculiarities of the hapless inmates,

greatly assisted me in the earnest scrutiny with which I watched every movement, every play of feature of those stricken creatures. It was reading one of the most harrowing pages out of Nature's book, and so faithfully conned over that every character was impressed indelibly on my memory. I had gone through two wards, and when my conductor was applying his key to the grated door of the third, I declined, being, indeed, quite unable to extend my observations further. I took from thence lessons, painful ones indeed, that in after-years added to the truth of my representations.

The remainder of the day, till my friend left me in the evening at my lodgings, was passed in sight-seeing. I went to bed at an early hour, and had scarce laid down when every image that I had so carefully scanned at the asylum in the morning came before me in such terrible reality, such fleshly distinctness, that, unable to shut them from my sight, I said to myself in a perfect agony of endurance, "I would give worlds to believe this a dream." It was really horrible, and worked me into a state of mental agony that made me fear I was on the point of losing my senses. I had only at last power left me to raise myself on my knees upon my bed, and in a few despairing words pray with frantic fervour that I might only retain my intellect whilst I lived, when I must have sunk down in a state of insensibility, and have found eventually in sleep a refuge from the dreadful vision. About half a year after the same resemblances returned to me, but so shadowy and faint that I could perceive it to be an illusion.

From Glasgow I went to a successful engagement with my father at Swansea, accompanying him from thence to Bristol, where a fortnight's performances concluded my London vacation. At Bristol orders from the managers reached me to prepare myself in the part of Macduff for Monday, September 6th (1819), to begin the Covent Garden season; for Wednesday in Joseph Surface, which I had never acted; for the following Monday in Rolla; and to be perfect in the new character of Mordent for the second Wednesday. This was certainly rather high pressure. Macduff I was obliged to decline, and to give every unoccupied minute to the other parts. Hitherto my onward and upward course had been looked on with hope, and

not without confidence, by many habitual frequenters of the theatre, while by others a certain amount of talent, not treading on the heels of their own favourites, was grudgingly conceded to me. But now a wider field seemed opening to me, and in my return to London for the ensuing season the opportunity for fairly testing my powers shone out in prospect to me.

CHAPTER XIII.

1819–1820.—Letters from brother in India—London season—Favourable opening—Joseph Surface—Rolla—Mordent—Henry V.—Othello—Rob Roy—Biron—Hotspur—Clytus—Desperate condition of Covent Garden Theatre—First appearance in Richard III.—Complete success—Contemporary criticisms—Effect on the treasury of the theatre—Altered position—Account of Mrs. Siddons in Rowe's 'Tamerlane'—First appearance in Coriolanus—Sonnet by Barry Cornwall—A fickle lady—Jaques—Robert Dudley—Front de Bœuf in 'Ivanhoe'—Henri Quatre—Edmund in 'Lear'—Kean's Lear—Production of 'Virginius'—Sheridan Knowles—Dedication of 'Virginius' to Macready—Hazlitt—Jackson—Appearance in Macbeth—Refusal of pecuniary gifts on benefits.

My correspondence had been regularly maintained with my brother, which during our London vacation brought me his account of an action in which he had been engaged in the spring—the storming of a hill fort, Asseerghur. The following short extract is eminently characteristic of him:—

"On the orders arriving I waited on Major Dalrymple, to resign the command of the company I was attached to, and request permission to join the storming party. He very kindly granted my demand. The doctors desired me not to go, but away I marched in spite of the faculty. However, I had cause to confess that they were no fools, nor I a second John of Gaunt. As long as the running and shouting lasted, I could have followed the bubble which charmed me on over impossibilities; but after standing in the sun for some hours, I found the fag of our night march, my consequent exertion, the heat of the weather, &c., all working so strongly against a constitution debilitated by two months' severe illness, that faith! I thought I was going to 'greet the objects of my early love.' However, I was determined you should have old Cato's consolation if I left you, and I am well aware that it was my ardent desire to merit your approbation as much as any other cause that kept me up. I knew I was uttering your sentiments when, in reply to the surgeon, who requested me to evade, at least, a part of my duty, I said, 'My dear Evans, I consider the man who fears to risk his health in the performance of

his duty not a bit more respectable a character than the rascal who deserts his comrade in danger; I may recover from the illness you seem to apprehend, but I never could recover my own good opinion if I followed your advice.' It is to you I owe every feeling which gratifies and supports me."

"*Fort St. George, July* 1818.—Your friendship is invaluable. I know not a truly happy feeling I have enjoyed for which I am not more or less indebted to it. In thinking of you I forget all in life that is not to be loved, and bless my fate that made me what I am. The affectionate solicitude for my honour and happiness which appears in every line you have written claims my warmest gratitude. Your advice shall be scrupulously observed. Do not in future spare it, for in no country can it ever be so essentially necessary. Men become here degenerate, idle, dissipated, discontented, and not unfrequently disgraced, by such imperceptible progressions, that the warning voice of my better genius cannot be too often heard. You know the influence you possess in all that regards me, and pray continue that brotherly kindness which has already so much benefited me.—E. N. M."

It was under adverse and unpropitious circumstances that the curtain of Covent Garden Theatre rose this season, September the 6th, 1819; but from hence an epoch dates in my professional history. Hitherto I had wanted room for my exertions, which now the disasters of the season laid open to me. The absence of Miss O'Neill and Miss Stephens, on leave till the winter, of Liston from illness, and the secession of Young, made deplorable gaps in the heretofore attractive company of Covent Garden. Elliston became the lessee of Drury Lane, which he opened most auspiciously with a corps of great comic power, holding Kean in reserve till its attraction began to droop. A fatality seemed to impend over the fortunes of Covent Garden. The prestige of the theatre received a withering shock from the injudicious selection of the opening play, 'Macbeth,' the cast of which (Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Bunn; Macduff, Yates; and the noble Thane, Charles Kemble) could awaken little hope of very rapturous applause. After Young's withdrawal the plea of seniority would seem to entitle Charles Kemble to the part of Macbeth, to which he was, unhappily, utterly incompetent. From a cordial reception on his entrance the audience gradually relapsed into cold attention, thence. to indifference and impatience, which in the third act found vent in derisive expression of weariness and disgust, ending in the fifth with an explosion of disapprobation such as has been rarely provoked by the performance of an actor of talent. In many of

the chivalric characters, and in those which were technically known as appertaining to "genteel comedy," he justly held a high reputation; but the lofty tragedy was beyond his reach, and even Mrs. Siddons used to say of him, "Why will Charles wish to attempt the high tragedy parts? He ought to know that the public will never receive him in them."

My turn now came on; and certainly my first appearance this season (September 8th) was one of no good augury. I had barely time to master the words of Joseph Surface, and was able to do little more in its performance than utter them correctly. In after-years I made this one of my most perfect representations. Rolla in 'Pizarro' was a success,* followed two nights after (September 15th) by a character on the study of which I had bestowed great pains, and in which were scenes of tragic power that would task the best efforts of the most finished artist. The play was called an alteration of Holcroft's 'Deserted Daughter;' the principal alteration was in its title, which now became, 'The Steward, or Fashion and Feeling; a play in five acts, by S. Beazley, Esq.' The name of my part was Mordent.† The play was acted several nights, and followed by Shakespeare's 'King Henry V.' (October 4th), at that time represented almost as barely as the poet describes:

> "With four or five most vile and ragged foils
> Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous."

My performance of the character, which was much applauded, I had, however, greatly improved, and it added to my popu-

* *From the Times.*—"The part of Rolla was sustained by Macready in a manner that betrayed little inferiority to any of his predecessors. He would be still greater if he did not so frequently affect a lowness of tone in speaking."

† *From the Times.*—"Mordent is a part extremely well adapted for dramatic effect, and it found a very able representative in Macready. The scene at the close of the fourth act, where he discovers that Joanna, in addition to the consequences of his abandonment, is exposed to seduction and infamy, almost reminded us of those passages in the character of Sir Giles Overreach which Kean has rendered so famous. In this character the feeling and power of the actor are called forth, particularly in the fourth act, where the treachery of his steward, in whom he had confided, is disclosed to him, and where he learns that by his own artifices his own child had been led to the verge of destruction. These scenes produced a strong sensation, and the act-drop fell amidst shouts of applause."

larity.* Othello, Rob Roy, Biron in Southern's 'Fatal Marriage,' Hotspur, and Clytus in Lee's 'Alexander the Great,' came next in succession. A gentleman of the name of Amherst (I think from the Surrey Theatre) appeared as the Macedonian hero. The remarkable effect of this performance was in the contrast between the inaudible tones and the resounding action of the new aspirant, whose voice, scarcely ever rising above a whisper, could not be heard over the orchestra, whilst his action, a repeated clapping together of the hands, echoed through the house. At first the listeners were disposed to be out of humour; but soon in a gamesome spirit, eliciting fun out of the absurdity, they took it in jest, and through the night kept up a sort of running fire, a succession of minute guns from boxes, pit, and galleries, responding in loud single claps to the only audible signals made to them or to us, the *dramatis personæ*, by the whispering Alexander, till the curtain fell amidst roars of laughter.

The condition of our lately flourishing and popular theatre had now become almost desperate. Indeed there seemed scarcely a chance of keeping it open. The original building debt, with its weight of interest, was still a heavy pressure on the concern, requiring extraordinary receipts to meet the frequent incoming bills, and buoy up the credit of the establishment; whilst neither in tragedy, comedy, nor opera did it appear possible for the managers, during the absence of so many attractive performers, to present an entertainment likely to engage the public attention. As if to aggravate still more the distressful load that was bearing down the property, a personal quarrel with Mr. Harris induced Charles Kemble temporarily to withdraw his name from the company's list. The horizon was dark indeed, not a glimmer of hope

* *From the Morning Herald.*—"*Covent Garden Theatre.*—Shakespeare's 'King Henry V.' was performed at this theatre last night. The character of that warlike and virtuous prince was sustained by Mr. Macready. In the fourth act, when the trump of battle sounds in his ear, and

> 'The warlike Harry, like himself,
> Assumes the port of Mars,'

his performance was truly splendid. His delivery of the invocation to the 'God of battles,' and of the noble speech which unfolds the anticipated glories of 'St. Crispin's Day,' is, we venture to say, unexcelled on the stage."

appearing to raise our drooping spirits. Ruin seemed inevitable, and was so near a culminating point, that, as Mr. Harris some time afterwards told my friend Sheil, he "did not know in the morning when he rose whether he should not shoot himself before the night!" Individually one could do little; but considering that a crew should lend their best aid to lighten a sinking ship, I proposed to several of the leading actors that all the performers rated at above £10 per week should agree to relinquish their weekly salaries until Christmas, on condition of receiving the arrears after that date. By some the suggestion was well received, others demurred to it; but the managers took advantage of it, and, the emergencies of the theatre making it compulsory on all, there was "no treasury" on several succeeding Saturdays.

And now came on what I must regard as the turning-point of my life. All is present to my mind as if occurring yesterday. Under the critical circumstances described above every one connected with Covent Garden had, of course, an interest in devising schemes for re-establishing the fashion it had lost; and many were the wild, unavailing recommendations of novelties and revivals from different quarters; but the box-office was the pulse of the theatre, where the state of public feeling was most sensibly felt, and the general appetite indicated; and from hence the urgent demand was almost daily made that I should appear in King Richard III. Mr. Harris, not at first attaching much importance to the experiment, proposed it to me. Why I should recoil from an attempt so flattering to my ambition may appear to some scarcely intelligible; but there was much to lose in the event of failure, and in a play worn threadbare before the public, what could I look to gain? Every character I had of late assumed had been for me a stepping-stone to popularity, and the prospect of a leading part with Miss O'Neill in Sheil's best play, 'The Huguenot,' which the author had expressed his intention of dedicating to me, promised to confirm my most sanguine expectations. For Richard my figure was ill adapted; and there was in threatening array against me the prejudice of partisans, and the prepossession of the town in favour of Kean's admirable performance, which would denounce as presumptuous my shortcomings, and thus retard my progress,

if not sink me permanently in the estimation of those who had hitherto upheld me. I shrank from the perilous attempt with most determinate repugnance. Days passed, and the darkening fortunes of the theatre still deepening in gloom, Mr. Harris, importuned by Brandon, the box-office keeper, who now was backed by Reynolds, renewed his instances with more urgency, which came at last to positive command; the desperate situation of the theatre would "no longer admit of vacillation or coy timidity; I must do it." My request for a little more time to re-read and reconsider the part failing to reconcile me to the risk I must encounter, I still pressed for further law.

But the question was decided for me. On Tuesday morning, October 19th, on my way to Reynolds' house, where Mr. Harris resided when in London, to my consternation I read in the Covent Garden playbills the announcement for the following Monday of "The historical tragedy of 'King Richard III.' The Duke of Gloster by Mr. Macready: his first appearance in that character." It was with a sickening sinking of the heart I turned back to my lodgings. There was now no escape! I was committed to the public, and must undergo the ordeal. No alternative was left me but to put on, in Hamlet's phrase, a "compelled valour," and devote my energies of mind and body to the task before me. All that history could give me I had already ferreted out; and for my portrait of the character, the self-reliant, wily, quick-sighted, decisive, inflexible Plantagenet, I went direct to the true source of inspiration, the great original, endeavouring to carry its spirit through the sententious and stagy lines of Cibber; not searching for particular 'points' to make, but rendering the hypocrisy of the man deceptive and persuasive in its earnestness, and presenting him in the execution of his will as acting with lightning-like rapidity. I pass by the alternations of hope and fear in which my intermediate days of preparation were passed, and in which there was little to encourage me. Nothing better than the old dresses of the wardrobe were allowed me, and even for the alteration of these I had to pay. The night of trial came (October 25th, 1819), to which I might truly apply Shakespeare's words:

> "This is the night
> That either makes me, or fordoes me quite."

A crowded house testified to the public interest in the result. The pit was literally jammed. The audience were evidently in a very excited state. The scene had scarcely changed to that of the White Tower, in which Gloster makes his entrance, when the applause broke out in anticipation of my appearance. This, which was intended to cheer me, rather tended to increase my nervousness. It was, however, to me like a life-and-death grapple, and I threw my whole soul into all I did. My auditors followed the early scenes with the deepest interest, frequently seizing opportunities to applaud. A friendly whisper, "It's all going well!" from Terry, who acted Buckingham, was better than music in my ear. At the repulse of Buckingham, "I'm busy; thou troublest me! I'm not i' the vein," the plaudits were sudden and hearty, and loud and long; but it was in the succeeding scene that the fortune of the night was decided. At the close of the compunctious soliloquy that Cibber has introduced Tyrrel enters: with all the eagerness of fevered impatience I rushed to him, inquiring of him in short, broken sentences the children's fate; with rapid decision on the mode of disposing of them, hastily gave him his orders, and hurrying him away, exclaimed with triumphant exultation, "Why then my loudest fears are hushed!" The pit rose to a man, and continued waving hats and handkerchiefs in a perfect tempest of applause for some minutes. The battle was won! The excitement of the audience was maintained at fever-heat through the remainder of the tragedy. The tent-scene closed with acclamations, that drowned the concluding couplet, and at the death the pit rose again with one accord, waving their hats with long-continued cheers; nor with the fall of the curtain did the display of enthusiasm relax. Connor, who played Tyrrel, the actor appointed, was not allowed to give out the play, and the practice was this evening first introduced at Covent Garden of 'calling on' the principal actor. In obedience to the impatient and persevering summons of the house, I was desired by Fawcett to go before the curtain; and accordingly I announced the tragedy for repetition, amidst the gratulating shouts that carried the assurance of complete success to my agitated and grateful heart.

I make extracts from several of the papers, but the criticism

of the *Morning Chronicle* is given entire, as more accurately describing the predicament in which failure would have placed me. The writer, as I subsequently learned, was James Haines, author of 'Mary Stuart,' 'Conscience,' 'Durazzo,' &c.

All concerned and interested in the management were assembled in Fawcett's room, and profuse in their praises. Congratulations poured in upon me, and the next day's newspapers recorded in no niggard spirit the triumph of the night.

From the Morning Chronicle.—"Last night was a most important one in the dramatic life of Mr. Macready. He undertook for the first time the character of Richard the Third, in Shakespeare's celebrated tragedy. The effort was hazardous in the highest degree: a failure must have stamped it as presumptuous, and in the present temper of the public mind, warm and enthusiastic as it is in admiration of Mr. Kean's admirable performance, there was no middle point between disgrace and glory. Mr. Macready's professional reputation was, in fact, at stake; he has saved and established it upon higher grounds than ever. His Richard was perfectly original; yet there was no apparent struggle after originality, no laborious effort to mark a difference in passages of small importance—the expedient of little minds to escape from their proper sphere of imitation. It was the natural unforced and unaffected effort of an intellect relying on its own powers, and making its own way undisturbed either by the wish or the apprehension of borrowing from any one. The performance had of course its unevenness. In some of the commencing scenes it was rather tame, but its distinguishing feature was that of rising in impression as the play advanced, a task which not only required the strongest mental qualifications, but such physical ones as perhaps no other actor on the stage possesses. This circumstance of itself contributed in no small degree to assist that air of novelty which certainly pervaded the whole. We found those parts which some of our most popular Richards have been obliged to slur over, from mere exhaustion, brought into prominent display. His voice, instead of suffering, seemed to acquire strength as he proceeded, and, strange to say, in a part of such exertion, was not only as audible, but as much at his command in all its tones and modulations, in the very last scene as in that which commenced his arduous task. It would be impossible, according to our present limits, to notice the various merits which an enlightened audience caught at and applauded; but justice requires that we should name a few. His courtship of Lady Anne, though by no means the most successful of his scenes, is, nevertheless, deserving of particular mention for one reason. That reason is, that it was conducted in a spirit of assumed sincerity, and with a total disregard of those sarcastic touches which tell so well in the acting, while they detract from the consistency of Richard's dissimulation. The first burst of applause, which gave an indication of complete success, was that excited by the scene in the Tower, while the assassins are murdering the children. His hurried directions for the disposal of the bodies was tragical in an eminent degree. The tent-scene was another fine display. His impetuosity and resolution, his momentary compunction

and rapid recovery, were all marked in the different scenes with extraordinary fidelity and vigour. His death was also managed with the best effect; and we may say of the whole, that though we were prepared to expect much from his talents, we did not expect so much as their display impressed us with on the occasion of which we are speaking. After the conclusion of the play he was called for to announce the repetition of it himself, which he did according to the summons of the audience; and there can be but little doubt that his exertions in the part will prove attractive for a considerable time. We have studiously avoided all comparisons with another great performer of the day. It is not necessary to the reputation of either that the other should be depreciated; or if it is, we decline the ungrateful office, in respect to the public and to ourselves."

From the Times.—"Macready appeared last night in the character of Richard III. for the first time. It was such a performance as could only result from great histrionic talent, combined with physical and mental energy, and was received by the audience with a degree of applause which fully sanctions his entering a higher sphere, than any he has hitherto moved in. . . . . The audience were frequent in their testimonies of applause, and at the fall of the curtain accompanied it by the waving of hats and handkerchiefs in long-continued motion. He was even called for, according to the practice adopted at, and hitherto we had hoped confined to, the other theatre, to announce the play for repetition, which, after silence had been obtained, evidently in a state of exhaustion, he complied with, and made his *exit* under a renewal of the applause just mentioned."

From the Courier.—"Mr. Macready last night performed the arduous character of Richard III., and astonished his most enthusiastic admirers with a display of talent which they scarcely deemed him to possess. The fate of this actor has been somewhat singular. Unaided by any concerted system of applause within the theatre, or by any equally concerted system of panegyric without, despising quackery of any sort, he has from the first moment of his appearance on the London boards been gradually, but incessantly gaining upon public opinion. Every time he has appeared he has acquired fresh fame. He did not burst forth at first with the dazzling brilliancy of a meteor, which runs a blazing but a fleeting course. He slowly ascended from the horizon, till now he has attained his zenith, where he shines with a vivid lustre, which, however, must even yet continue to increase, and which will have in it no other tendency to decay than that which the mere progress of time brings upon all human excellence. His performance last night was a splendid effort; and we never witnessed from an audience such vehement and impassioned applause. He has evidently studied the character with a profound discrimination of the author's meaning, and everywhere his conception and execution went hand in hand. His fine, mellow, sonorous voice thrilled upon the ear in tones which reminded us, as to their effect, of the matchless sway of Siddons. Upon the whole he has made a stride in professional fame that has placed him upon its pinnacle. When he died the pit rose with a simultaneous impulse, and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs testified the unbounded enthusiasm of the audience. They would fain have had the curtain drop; but the remainder of the dialogue was impatiently suffered to go on to its close. Mr. Connor then came forward to give out the performance for this evening; but the general cry of 'Macready, Macready!'

compelled him to appear once more, and receive the thundering plaudits of the house. Mr. Macready, as soon as silence could be restored, announced the play of 'Richard III.' for Thursday next, and withdrew amid the loudest plaudits we almost ever heard within the walls of a theatre."

Literary Gazette.—"*Macready's Richard III.*—Our habitual readers, aware of the very high estimation in which we have always held Mr. Macready's powers, will anticipate that we were prepared for a triumph on this occasion; and we rejoice to say that by this great effort that gentleman has made all the play-going world think as much of him as we do. We have, however, resolved to postpone a detailed examination of his Richard, because, striking and intense as was the effect he produced on Monday, his excessive trepidation and want of self-possession was so apparent, as to convince us that his every future assumption of the character would be infinitely more masterly. But we are far from *intending* to convey an idea that his performance was not admirable; it was so to the full meaning of that very lofty word; but it was not finished into what we think we shall soon see it, a concentration of all the best Richards of modern times, with a fine original colouring peculiar to the artist himself. In the early scenes Mr. Macready subdued his energies considerably; but afterwards they continued mounting to the end, when he was hailed with as general and enthusiastic applause as ever rewarded an actor's exertions. Though we have assigned our reason for not going into details, we must close with a sort of anecdotic specification—a dialogue which we overheard, at a place of eminent critical resort.

"'Have you seen Macready's —— ?'

"'Never was more delighted in my life.'

"'What! haven't you seen Kemble?' 'Yes!' 'And Cooke?' 'Yes!' 'And Kean?' 'Yes!' 'And never was more delighted?' 'Never; often not so much.' 'Kemble was glorious, and almost defies competition.' 'Granted; but here is competition that will not be defied, and without plucking one fibre of a leaf from our fine tragedian's classic crown, I will not adduce him to depress so noble a young man as this appears to be, with every requisite to inspire hope of future improvement, without a defect that time (a short time) will not cure, and with present excellence such as has rarely been seen on such an occasion.'"

Second Notice of the Times.—"Mr. Macready repeated the character on Thursday, and by this second performance has fully established his claims to a place in the highest rank of the drama. It had all the advantage over the first that might have been expected from a man of spirit and judgment who had the talent of discerning, by that sympathy which always exists between an actor and his audience, where he failed in making a due impression, and of redeeming the faults revealed to him from so unequivocal a source. The character was rendered more consistent as a whole, and more striking in the prominent passages. Its effect was fully proved by the warm and even enthusiastic reception given to it by the audience. The house was one of the fullest of the season."

Examiner. (By Leigh Hunt.)—"A new and unexpected circumstance has taken place here, which promises to rescue the character of the house from the pantomimic degradation into which it was fast falling. Mr. Macready has performed Richard twice in the course of the week, with the greatest applause. We must confess we went to see him with no sort of expectations

at all commensurate with the greatness of the part. We thought him a man of feeling, but little able to give a natural expression to it, and so taking the usual refuge in declamation. He appeared to us one of the best readers of a part we had seen, according to the received notions of good reading; but with the exception of a character now and then bordering on the melodramatic, like Rob Roy—that was all.

"We are bound to say that we found our anticipations completely erroneous. A proper sense of the greatness of the part and of the honourable rank as an actor which he now had to sustain, seems to have roused up all his intelligence to give fit companionship to his sensibility. We expected to find vagueness and generality, and we found truth of detail. We expected to find declamation, and we found thoughts giving a soul to words. We expected to find little more than showy gestures and a melodious utterance, and we found expression and the substantial Richard.

"A critic on these particular occasions is forced upon comparisons. However, they sometimes enable him to give his readers a more exact idea of a performance. Compared then with Mr. Kean, we should say that a division of merits, usual enough with the performance of such comprehensive characters as Shakespeare's, has taken place in the Richards of these two actors. Mr. Kean's Richard is the more sombre and perhaps deeper part of him; Mr. Macready's the livelier and more animal part—a very considerable one nevertheless. Mr. Kean's is the more gloomy and reflective villain, rendered so by the united effect of his deformity and subtle-mindedness; Mr. Macready's is the more ardent and bold-faced one, borne up by a temperament naturally high and sanguine, though pulled down by mortification. The one has more of the seriousness of conscious evil in it, the other of the gaiety of meditated success. Mr. Kean's has gone deeper even than the relief of his conscience—he has found melancholy at the bottom of the necessity for that relief; Mr. Macready's is more sustained in his troubled waters by constitutional vigour and buoyancy. In short, Mr. Kean's Richard is more like King Richard, darkened by the shadow of his very approaching success, and announcing the depth of his desperation when it shall be disputed; Mr. Macready's Richard is more like the Duke of Gloucester, brother to the gay tyrant Edward IV., and partaking as much of his character as the contradiction of the family handsomeness in his person would allow.

"If these two features in the character of Richard could be united by any actor, the performance would be a perfect one; but when did the world ever see a perfect performance of a character of Shakespeare's? When did it ever see the same Macbeth's good and ill nature worn truly together—the same King John looking mean with his airs of royalty—the same Hamlet, the model of a court and the victim of melancholy? Mr. Kean's Othello is perhaps the most perfect performance on the modern stage; but it is not a perfect Othello nevertheless. The union of such a variety of tones of feeling as prevails in the great humanities of Shakespeare seems as impossible to be found in an actor as the finest musical instrument is insufficient to supply all the effect of a great writer for a band.

"At the same time when we thus compare Mr. Macready with Mr. Kean, it is to be recollected that Mr. Kean first gave the living stage that example of a natural style of acting, on which Mr. Macready has founded his new rank in the theatrical world. Nor must we omit that the latter falls into some

defects which the former is never betrayed into, and those too of a description inconsistent with the general style of his performance. We allude to some over-soft and pathetic tones towards the conclusion of the part, where Richard is undergoing remorse of conscience. Richard might lament, and even be pathetic; but he would certainly never whine, or deal in anything approaching to the lackadaisical. We think both performers occasionally too violent; but this may be partly a stage necessity. Mr. Macready (and he is evidently quite capable of doing it) should reflect that all depth of feeling in reflecting minds requires a proportionate depth and quietness of expression. It may be as imaginative as he pleases; but it has no taste or leisure for dallying with the gentilities of grief.

"Upon the whole, Mr. Macready's Richard is a very great addition indeed to his reputation, and no small one to the stock of theatrical pleasure. The Covent Garden stage was thirsty for a little more genius to refresh it, and he has collected all his clouds, and burst down upon it in a sparkling shower. We certainly never saw the gayer part of Richard to such advantage. His very step, in the more sanguine scenes, had a princely gaiety of self-possession, and seemed to walk off to the music of his approaching triumph."

As one gratifying consequence, the treasury was reopened on the following Saturday, and the performers paid me the compliment of admitting they were "indebted to me for their salaries." The houses were filled on the nights of the play's repetition; and on the third Monday of its performance (November 8th) at Covent Garden, Kean assumed the part at Drury Lane, with the announcement of "New Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations," and Elliston as Richmond. For several evenings Richard III. occupied both the playbills, furnishing subject-matter for comparative criticisms in the papers, and not only for town-talk, but for street-ballads and caricatures in glaring colours in the print-shop windows, representing the 'Rival Richards.'

The mark at which I had aimed so long was now attained. I was the undisputed head of the theatre, and upon myself must depend how much further my career might lead to celebrity and fortune. My profession had not been adopted from choice; but it would have been ungrateful to complain of the destiny which placed so much within my reach. On the "utmost round" of "young ambition's ladder," far from "spurning the degrees by which I did ascend," I was the more sensible of perseverance, and resolved, now under happier auspices, to continue with unabating energy my efforts towards greater finish in my art, and with jealous diligence secure the place I had won.

Rowe's play of 'Tamerlane,' without time to perfect the different performers in its words, was acted one night. It is a heavy declamatory production of the cast-iron school, indebted, when first brought out, for its short-lived popularity to the political temper of the day, which assigned to William III. the character of the magnanimous Tartar, and the sanguinary Bajazet to Louis XIV. In theatrical records it is indeed memorable for one of those marvellous displays of tragic power that seem in their narration to task credibility; but my father was in the pit of Drury Lane with Holman on the occasion to which I allude, and his account has been confirmed to me by Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Charles Kemble, who performed in the play, and others. John Kemble acted Bajazet, and Mrs. Siddons was the Aspasia. In the last act, when, by order of the tyrant, her lover Monesis is strangled before her face, she worked herself up to such a pitch of agony, and gave such terrible reality to the few convulsive words she tried to utter, as she sank a lifeless heap before her murderer, that the audience for a few moments remained in a hush of astonishment, as if awe-struck; they then clamoured for the curtain to be dropped, and insisting on the manager's appearance, received from him, in answer to their vehement inquiries, the assurance that Mrs. Siddons was alive, and recovering from the temporary indisposition that her exertions had caused. They were satisfied as regarded her, but would not suffer the performance to be resumed. As an instance of the impression this great actress made on individuals who might be supposed insensible, from familiarity, to the power of acting, Holman turned to my father, when Mrs. Siddons had fallen, and looking aghast in his face, said: "Macready, do I look as pale as you?" a strange question, but one not unintelligible, under the extraordinary excitement of the moment.

The success of Richard would in ordinary course necessitate the trial of other leading characters. Coriolanus was the next selected by the managers. In this I stood at disadvantage, with the recollection of Kemble still fresh in the memory of the playgoing public; but with a full consciousness of the difficulty of my task, I went to work. To add dignity and grace to my deportment I studied under D'Egville the various attitudes from the antique, and practised the more

stately walk which was enforced by the peculiarity of their dress on the *gens togata.* I allowed myself no leisure, intent on mastering the patrician's outward bearing, and under that giving full vent to the unbridled passion of the man. My reception (Nov. 29th, 1819) was that of an acknowledged favourite, and the applause throughout the play and at its close exceeded my most ambitious hopes.*

Among the flattering testimonies offered me on this second venture none were held by me in equal esteem with the graceful sonnet published in the *Literary Gazette* by Barry Cornwall.

"MR. MACREADY IN 'CORIOLANUS.'

'This is the noblest Roman of them all;'
And he shall wear his victor's crown, and stand
Distinct amidst the genius of the land,
And lift his head aloft while others fall.
He hath not bowed him to the vulgar call,
Nor bid his countenance shine obsequious, bland,
But let his dark eye keep its high command,
And gather'd 'from the few' his coronal.
Yet unassuming hath he won his way;
And therefore fit to breathe the lines of him
Who gaily, once, beside the Avon river,
Shaped the great verse that lives, and shall live for ever.
But he now revels in eternal day,
Peerless amongst the earth-born cherubim."

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* *From the Morning Herald.*—"Mr. Macready by his performance of Coriolanus last night has again won the first honours of the stage. The previous development of this great performer's genius in Richard stripped his last night's enterprise of all its peril and much of its aspiring. . . . We have merely room to state that in the scenes where he consents, at the entreaty of his mother, to go back and conciliate the incensed people, and where he gives vent to his scorn and defiance of the tribunes, he gave proofs of variety, flexibility, and power rarely equalled and absolutely unexcelled. . . . The quarrel with Aufidius, particularly that passage in which Kemble was so fine —the retort of 'Boy'—produced acclamation. . . . There is one grand point in which no other living actor but Mr. Macready can approach Kemble,—we mean the magic power of imposing an illusive image of physical grandeur upon the very sense of the beholder, merely by some slight change of attitude or action. From the death of Coriolanus to the fall of the curtain the house resounded with applause, and in the pit the waving of hats was universal. Mr. Egerton came on to announce the next performance, but was obliged to give way for a general cry of Macready. He did accordingly make his appearance, was received with the liveliest expressions of kindness by the audience, and announced the repetition of 'Coriolanus' on Wednesday."

Fortune was now smiling on me. An offer of £50 per night, made to me by the Brighton manager, was too tempting to be resisted, and for three weeks I was able, by travelling all night, to act there once in each week for the proposed sum. Nor was it less a satisfaction to me to post down to Bristol, and by the performance of Richard and Coriolanus to crowded houses to render serviceable aid to my father's managerial undertaking. Being obliged to hire a carriage in order to post home for the next night's play at Covent Garden, I took with me a youth, a cadet at Woolwich, the brother of a young lady between whom and myself all but mutual declarations of attachment had taken place. She was in person very lovely; but my judgment was at war with the partiality into which the fancied preference of myself had flattered me. It was of course a pleasure to me, as an attention to her, residing at Bath, to give her brother the opportunity of spending two days of his Christmas holidays with his family; and leaving Bristol after acting Coriolanus, I received in returning home my young fellow-traveller about midnight at Bath, as we changed horses there. His news took me by surprise, and caused me some agitation, which in the friendly darkness escaped observation. It was that his beautiful sister (*varium et mutabile!*) was engaged to be married to a gentleman whom she had met at Dawlish. Flushed as I was with professional successes, my wounded self-love soon found refuge in activity of thought, her fickleness saving me trouble in reconciling myself to the change. In the course of two months she broke off with her new lover, and was earnest in her entreaties to a mutual friend to invite me down to meet her at his place in Oxfordshire, where she was to make a visit. But in complying with her wish, he knew, and told her, his conviction of my resolution:

> "I do confess, thou'rt smooth and fair,
> And I might have gone far, far to love thee,
> Had I not found the slightest prayer
> That lip could move had power to move thee;
> But I can let thee now alone,
> As worthy to be loved by none."

My good friend did not, however, think so, for in the course of a few months he married her himself, and verified the tag of children's stories by being "very happy ever after."

The heaviest mischance that could depress the fortunes of Covent Garden Theatre now fell with almost crushing effect. All—but none with the same motives of regret that weighed on me—were in a state of temporary despair in hearing that Miss O'Neill had quitted the stage! Her husband, Mr. Becher,* met the claims of Mr. Harris in the most liberal and gentlemanly spirit; but no amount of money that could be reasonably asked would compensate for the loss of her great talent. Still, "il faut cultiver notre jardin;" the best face was put on this disaster, for such it was, and the work of the season went on. The grass was not allowed to grow under our feet. Jaques, in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It,' was a study for me, one of those real varieties of mind with which it is a pleasure in representation to identify oneself. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in a bald translation of Schiller's 'Marie Stuart'—a compound of Bois de Guilbert and Front de Bœuf in a drama by Beazley from Sir W. Scott's 'Ivanhoe'—and a very effective sketch of Henri Quatre in a clever operatic drama by Morton under that title, carried me onward through a great part of the season.

It was in the Easter Week that old Mr. Harris, the patentee and chief proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, came up to town from his seat, Belmont, near Uxbridge. I received a very courteous message from him expressive of his wish to see me; and going to his hotel, I was introduced to him, a very old gentleman, with all the ceremonious and graceful manners ascribed to the Chesterfield of his early day. His wish to see me was to thank me personally for the service I had rendered the theatre in its distress. It was a gratifying and uncalled-for manifestation of feeling on his part, and justly appreciated on my own.

The performance of Tate's miserable debilitation and disfigurement of Shakespeare's sublime tragedy of 'King Lear' (adopted by Garrick, Kemble, &c.) had been for several years interdicted at the theatres, as suggesting in its principal character a resemblance to the actual condition of the reigning sovereign, George III. His death this year (January 29th, 1820) caused the restriction to be removed, and the play was

* Mr. Becher became Sir William Becher on his creation as a baronet in 1831.—Ed.

to be revived for Kean, with a very expensive outlay, at Drury Lane. Henry Harris, wishing to forestall its production there, directed me to prepare myself in the principal character. This *ruse* of antagonism was certainly not in a generous spirit of competition. The object was to hurry out the play, no matter how prepared, in order to anticipate the rival theatre. But however indulgently the audience might be disposed to receive me, it would not have been consistent with the principles I held in respect to my art to venture before them the grandest and most affecting of the Great Master's creations without time to search out the clearest conception of his intentions, and perfect myself in the most elaborately studied execution of them. In refusing to commit myself to so rash an experiment, it was only due to Mr. Harris's interests to state my willingness to act any other character in the play, and on his naming Edmund I without pause undertook the part (April 13th), and lost no credit by it. With the sole purpose of taking the edge of novelty off the revival of the play, he engaged Booth for a few nights to act Lear. It could not be a success. It was acted three nights. On the 24th of the same month, April, it was brought out at Drury Lane with "dresses, scenery, and machinery," all new. A great display was attempted by what the playbills called a "Land-storm," intended to represent the overflowing of a river, bearing down rocks and trees in its course; but as a scenic effect it was a noisy failure, and as an illustration of Shakespeare's text, which tells us, "for many miles about there's scarce a bush," a ludicrous blunder.

Kean's personation of King Lear (it must be borne in mind that it was Tate's version, or parody, as without a very great strain on the word it may not unaptly be termed)* could not be entirely void of those flashes of genius that were rarely wanting even in his least successful assumptions; but in my judgment it was not to be ranked with his masterly portraitures of Othello, Overreach, Mortimer, or Richard, and such appeared to be the opinion of the public. Most actors—Garrick, Kemble,

* It would scarcely be believed that such a passage as the following would be given in what professes to be an improvement on Shakespeare. It is Gloster addressing Edmund in reference to his son Edgar:

"Find him,
Edmund, that I may wind me to his heart,
And twist his bleeding bowels round my arm!"

and Kean among others—seem to have based their conception of the character on the infirmity usually associated with "four-score and upwards," and have represented the feebleness instead of the vigour of old age. But Lear's was in truth a "lusty winter:" his language never betrays imbecility of mind or body. He confers his kingdom indeed on "younger strengths;" but there is still sufficient invigorating him to allow him to ride, to hunt, to run wildly through the fury of the storm, to slay the ruffian who murdered his Cordelia, and to bear about her dead body in his arms. There is, moreover, a heartiness, and even jollity in his blither moments, no way akin to the helplessness of senility. Indeed the towering range of thought with which his mind dilates, identifying the heavens themselves with his griefs, and the power of conceiving such vast imaginings, would seem incompatible with a tottering, trembling frame, and betoken rather one of "mighty bone and bold emprise," in the outward bearing of the grand old man. In Kean's performance there were many striking effects, but as a whole the impression it left was weak in comparison with his triumphant success in other characters.

In the course of the month of April an application was made to me by my old Glasgow friend, John Tait, on the subject of a tragedy that had been produced at Glasgow with much applause. The author he described as a man of original genius, and one in whose fortunes he and many of his fellow-citizens took a deep interest. It so happened that I had undergone the reading of two or three tragedies when late at Glasgow, and it was with consequent distrust that, to oblige a very good friend, I undertook to read this. Tait was to send the MS. without delay, and I looked forward to my task with no very good-will. It was about three o'clock one day that I was preparing to go out, when a parcel arrived containing a letter from Tait and the MS. of 'Virginius.' After some hesitation I thought it best to get the business over, to do at once what I had engaged to do, and I sat down determinedly to my work. The freshness and simplicity of the dialogue fixed my attention; I read on and on, and was soon absorbed in the interest of the story and the passion of its scenes, till at its close I found myself in such a state of excitement that for a time I was undecided what step to take. Impulse was in the ascendant, and snatching up my

pen I hurriedly wrote, as my agitated feelings prompted, a letter to the author, to me then a perfect stranger. I was closing my letter as the postman's bell was sounding up the street, when the thought occurred to me, "What have I written? It may seem wild and extravagant; I had better re-consider it." I tore the letter, and, sallying out, hastened directly to my friend Procter's lodgings, wishing to consult him, and test by his the correctness of my own judgment. He was from home, and I left a card, requesting him to breakfast with me next day, having something very remarkable to show him. After dinner at a coffee-house I returned home, and in more collected mood again read over the impassioned scenes, in which Knowles has given heart and life to the characters of the old Roman story. My first impressions were confirmed by a careful re-perusal, and in sober certainty of its justness I wrote my opinion of the work to Knowles, pointing out some little oversights, and assuring him of my best exertions to procure its acceptance from the managers, and to obtain the highest payment for it. I have not preserved a copy of my letter, but its general purport may be guessed from the reply to it, which is here *verbatim:*

GLASGOW, 20*th April*, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,—For bare sir is out of the question—I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the most kind—I must not say flattering—tho' most flattering—letter that you have written to me. Really I cannot reply to it in any manner that will satisfy myself, so I shall only once for all repeat—I thank you; and feel as if I should never forget the opening of a correspondence with Mr. Macready. You must have a very warm heart. Do not think, I entreat you, that because I express myself imperfectly—very imperfectly—there is any deficiency where there ought not to be.

I have but a few minutes—I should say moments—to write. All your suggestions I have attended to: I believe so, and if I have not, I fully proposed to attend to them, except so far as the word "squeak" is concerned: that word I know not how to lose, for want of a fit substitute—*the smallest possible sound.* Find out a term, and make the alteration yourself; or if you cannot, and still wish an alteration, do what you like, I don't care about it, I merely submit the matter to you. Oh, I have forgotten the word "cheer;" what shall I do also in the way of finding a substitute for that word?

I cannot stop to write another line.

I am very much your debtor, and truly

Your grateful humble Servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.

Make any alterations you like in any part of the play, and I shall be obliged to you.

A letter more truly characteristic of a man was never written. Procter was with me betimes the morning after my call. How pleasant is the recollection of that morning's conference! How delightful to recall particular instances in a life of benevolence, the history of which would be one long catalogue of kindly deeds! We read the play together, and no word of exception was heard to jar against the praise he spontaneously and liberally bestowed on the work—but he had ever a ready and unenvying admiration of contemporary genius. He undertook to write the epilogue, and to enlist Hamilton Reynolds in its cause, as the contributor of the prologue.

In accepting the tragedy Mr. Harris consented to my stipulation that its payment (£400 for twenty nights) should be continued into the next season, which, making the difference of £100, I had great satisfaction in communicating to Knowles. The characters were allotted, and the calls issued. Fawcett, having much on his hands, asked me to read the play to the company, and to take on myself the "getting it up," *i.e.* the arrangement of the action and grouping of the scenes. Not one sixpence was allowed for its *mise en scène*, and to be correct in my costume I was obliged to purchase my own dresses. But my heart was in the work, so much so that it would seem my zeal ran the risk of outstripping discretion, for it was made a complaint by Egerton, the Numitorius, that "the youngest man in the theatre should take on him to order and direct his elders." On Fawcett's report of this to me, I directly made the *amende* to Egerton, apologizing for any want of deference I might have shown to my brother actors.

The play was, in French phrase, well mounted, with Charles Kemble, Icilius; Terry, Dentatus; Abbott, Appius Claudius; and the lovely Miss Foote (afterwards Countess of Harrington), Virginia: who, thankfully accepting my tuition, produced the most pleasing effect by aiming at none. My every thought was engrossed by Virginius. I had perfected myself roughly in the words of the part before presenting the play, and with the first of morning and the last of night the images it offered were present to me, whilst every vacant hour was employed in practice, to give smoothness to those pathetic touches and those whirlwinds of passion in the part, which in the full sway of their fury required the actor's self-command to ensure

the correctness of every tone, gesture, and look. The rehearsals, as may be supposed, had been most carefully superintended, and all appeared in the best train, when on the night before the play's performance an order from Carlton House, desiring the MS. (which had passed the Lord Chamberlain's office) to be sent there immediately, filled us all with alarm. Of course it was immediately sent, and, as reported, subjected to the royal scrutiny. The next morning we were assembled on the stage waiting for it, when it was returned, with only pencil marks drawn over some lines in the part of Appius Claudius, expatiating on tyranny. On May 17th (1820) 'Virginius' was first acted, and its early scenes were not unattended with danger, Charles Kemble being so hoarse that not one word, spoken in the lowest whisper, could be heard; but the action of the scene told its story with sufficient distinctness to keep alive its interest. This grew as the play advanced, and in the third act, in Icilius's great scene, Kemble's voice came out in all its natural strength, and brought down thunders of applause. With the progress of the play the rapt attention of the audience gradually kindled into enthusiasm. Long-continued cheers followed the close of each succeeding act; half-stifled screams and involuntary ejaculations burst forth when the fatal blow was struck to the daughter's heart; and the curtain fell amidst the most deafening applause of a highly-excited auditory. The play was an unquestionable triumph, which Knowles had sat in the pit to witness and enjoy.*

* *From the Times.*—"Macready deserves peculiar praise for his Virginius. His acting is always excellent; but he has in this character touched the passions with a more masterly hand, and evinced deeper pathos than we recollect on any former occasion. The tone with which in the judgment scene he uttered the words—'My poor child here, who clings to me for protection'—was truly pathetic. Some embarrassment arose from the entangling of the knife in the folds of his robe, which injured the general effect; but the blow when given was terrific. As a catastrophe nothing could be finer, and the play should end, if possible, as that of Alfieri does, with the line from Livy, addressed to Appius, 'With this blood I devote thy head to the infernal Gods.'"

From the Morning Herald.—"Virginius is drawn a dramatic person of high order. His historical character and the Roman manners of the time are preserved with great force and fidelity of touch. One may apply to him the expression of a living orator, 'original and unaccommodating, the features of his character bear the hardihood of antiquity.' The delineation of this arduous

In my eager desire to obtain for Knowles all possible benefit derivable from his beautiful work, I called on Murray, the most liberal of publishers, with the expectation that he would give, according to his wont, a liberal price for it. He received it in the most friendly spirit, and my disappointment was in proportion to my raised expectations when, a day or two after, I found the MS. upon my table with his note declining to publish it. His reader and adviser on this occasion, as I was informed, was the Rev. H. Milman, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, one whose name is justly to be classed with those of the great and good, but who, I think, in this instance, "impar sibi," did not exert that liberality and clearness of judgment which would ordinarily and justly be ascribed to him; for the star of Alfieri's genius looks pale on this subject before the lustre of that of Knowles, and so long as there is a stage, and actors capable of representing the best feelings of our nature, so long will the pathos, the poetry, and passion of 'Virginius' command the tears and applause of its audience.

Its publisher was Ridgway of Piccadilly, an old friend of the author, and it has passed through many editions.

An acquaintance formed under the circumstances, that introduced me to Knowles, would naturally soon ripen into intimacy. It might almost have been said of him, that he "wore his heart upon his sleeve," so unreserved and expansive was he in the expression of his feelings. His rough exterior would better convey the idea of the captain of a Berwick smack than that of the poet who could conceive the virgin purity, the tenderness and grace of his "sweet Virginia." To a sensibility almost womanly, and an exuberant flow of boyish spirits, he united the most manly sentiments, ready

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character by Mr. Macready will take its place among the first performances on the stage. It is one of the finest specimens of the art which his great and still growing genius has yet produced. Austere, tender, familiar, elevated, mingling at once terror and pathos, he ran over the scale of dramatic expression with the highest degree of what may be called power. We have not space left to notice the passages in which both the actor and the dramatist were most applauded; but we must not pass unnoticed the scene of sensibility so strong, so natural, in which he yields his child with tears even to the lover of his choice, his first meeting with Virginia on his return, and his appearance before the tribunal."

courage, and conscientious rectitude of purpose. The creature of impulse and sensitiveness, his strong good sense, when brought to bear on his errors of precipitation, would instantly correct them; but his generous and too-confiding nature would occasionally betray him into embarrassments that tried his patience without adding to his stock of experience. With all his genius his want of method in his affairs made the greater part of his life a struggle with pecuniary difficulties; but even under the pinchings of poverty he would seek indemnity from the hard dealings of fortune in the little swarm of children that clustered round him, and would suggest comfort to their mother in the very cause of her anxiety, exclaiming, "Look at them, Maria, are we not rich in these?" His heart was in his home, and with the greetings of friends and the plaudits of the theatre ringing in his ears, he was longing impatiently to return there. In a letter from his wife on the news of his play's success reaching Glasgow, recounting the many visits of congratulation she had received, she observed—"Ah, James, we shall not want friends now!" Few men have had more or truer friends, but a sort of perverse destiny rendered their efforts for many years unavailing, in assisting him in the establishment of an undisturbed regularity of income.

A little incident may serve to show the singularity of his character in his inattention to ceremonious observances. On the Sunday evening after the production of 'Virginius,' I was dining with Sir Robert Kemeys in Park Lane, where, I fancy, I was the only untitled guest at table. In the course of the dinner one of the servants half whispered to me, "Sir, a person wants to see you." Utterly ignorant of any business that any one could have with me, I was a good deal embarrassed, but Sir Robert very good-naturedly relieved me by saying, "You had better see the person, Mr. Macready;" and accordingly I went into the hall, where to my astonishment, in the dusk of the evening, I distinguished Knowles. "How are you?" was his greeting. "Good heavens, Knowles! what is the matter? You should not have come here to me!" was my hasty remark. "Oh, I beg your pardon," he replied: "I am going out of town in the morning, and I wished to give you this myself. Good-bye!" thrusting a parcel into my hand and hurrying away. Putting it in my pocket without looking at it, I returned

in some confusion to the dinner-table. When I reached home, I found the packet to contain the printed copy of 'Virginius,' dedicated to myself, and a note sent afterwards to my lodgings, expressive of his regret for his intrusion on me, and, evidently under wounded feelings, informing me that it was the first copy struck off, and bidding me farewell. I wrote immediately to him, explaining the awkwardness of my position and my ignorance of his object in coming to me and wishing to see him. The note reached him in the morning: he came at once, and all was made perfectly smooth between us.* At a supper he gave to a few intimate friends at a coffee-house in Covent Garden (the bill of fare of which was salmon and a boiled leg of mutton) I first met Hazlitt, to whose early advice and tutorship he considered himself greatly indebted. Hazlitt was a man whose conversation could not fail to arrest attention. He found in me a ready listener, and in the interest of our discussion became irritated by the boisterous boyish sallies of Knowles's irrepressible spirits, rebuking him for his unseasonable interruptions, and, as one having authority, desiring him not to "play the fool." The poet was in truth a very child of nature, and Hazlitt, who knew him well, treated him as such.

Among the many gratifications associated in my mind with the production of 'Virginius' the acquaintance first made with my friend Jackson is not the least prized. It was in this character I first sat to him, for my portrait in 'Virginius,' and, as intimacy developed to me more and more the simplicity and benevolence of his nature, my attachment to him kept pace in its growth with my admiration of his genius during his life, and still clings warmly to his memory.

* The following is the dedication that appeared in all the earlier editions, but has been omitted in the later ones:—

"To William Macready, Esq.

"My dear Sir,—What can I do less than dedicate this Tragedy to you? This is a question which you cannot answer; but I can—I cannot do less; and if I could do more, I ought and would.

"I was a perfect stranger to you: you read my play, and at once committed yourself respecting its merits. This, perhaps, is not saying much for your head, but it says a great deal for your heart; and that is the consideration which above all others makes me feel happy and proud in subscribing myself "Your grateful Friend and Servant,

"James Sheridan Knowles."

Through the remainder of the season 'Virginius' was acted every night appropriated to benefits. Mine came off, June 9th, with flying colours. A crowded house put a good sum in my pocket; and my first essay in 'Macbeth,' on the study of which I had bestowed my best pains, was very favourably received.* To strengthen the cast of the play I had asked Terry to undertake Macduff; at which Abbott, who had once appeared in the part, took umbrage and made it the ground of a quarrel. It was in vain that I pleaded to him the universal custom on such occasions, and in the most soothing and friendly manner deprecated his taking offence. He very intemperately persisted in language that was inadmissible, and which left me no alternative but to retort (which I did most reluctantly) by a personal indignity. Emery, who was present, came up to me when Abbott left the room and took me by the hand, saying, "My dear William, if it had been my own son, I would not have wished you to have done other than you did." The issue was that Abbott applied to Mr. Richard Jones to be his friend on the occasion, who at once told him that he was greatly to blame and in the wrong throughout. The terms of an apology to me were settled

* *From the Morning Herald, June 10th.*—"*Covent Garden.*—The tragedy of 'Macbeth' was acted at this theatre last night for the benefit of Mr. Macready. It was his first performance of that admirable character, and he has reason to be doubly gratified with his selection of its performance for his benefit. It attracted a crowded and remarkably brilliant audience, and in this new essay he met with signal success. His air of bewildered agitation upon coming on the stage after the interview with the weird sisters was a most judicious and effective innovation upon the style of his predecessors. In the banquet scene too he made an original and admirable effect. Instead of intimidating the Ghost into a retreat, he fell back, sank into a chair, covered his face with his hands, then looked again, perceived the Ghost had disappeared, and upon being relieved from the fearful vision recovered once more the spring of his soul and body. The effect was powerful. His expression of terror after the murder produced a long-continued stillness. The pathos which he infused into Macbeth was a principal merit in his delineation. At the fall of the curtain, upon Mr. Connor's appearing to announce the performance of the next evening, there was a universal clamour for Mr. Macready. After some delay he did appear, but was quite exhausted by the exertions of the last act. He was so overpowered by fatigue and perhaps by the enthusiasm which the audience manifested towards him, that Mr. Fawcett came out and said that, in consequence of the estimation which the audience had expressed of Mr. Macready's performance, the play should be repeated on Thursday."

between Jones and my friend Lieutenant Twiss of the Royal Engineers, which, repeated by Abbott, called forth from me an expression of regret that I should have suffered myself to be provoked to such an extremity. It had been a practice, as was said, of long standing for the frequenters of the theatres to send, on the performers' benefit nights, presents of more or less value to the artists whom they particularly approved. This custom seemed to me to compromise the actor's independence, and in that belief I had laid it down as a rule not to accept more than the value of the tickets required. I will not contend for the prudence of this determination: with me it was a matter of feeling. I could not consider myself sitting down to table on terms of social equality with a man to whom I had been obliged for the gift of five, ten, or twenty pounds. I may have been too fastidious; but I have never had cause to regret the line of conduct adopted in this particular. Among others, on the occasion of this benefit, Lord Glengall sent me ten pounds and Colonel Berkeley fifteen, which I returned with letters that elicited from them the admission that it was "impossible to be offended" with me.

CHAPTER XIV.

1820–1821–1822.—Country engagements—Dublin—Newcastle—Aberdeen—Montrose—Dundee—Perth—Future wife—Lancaster—Liverpool—George Meredith—Fifth Covent Garden season—Iachimo—Zanga—Reading MSS. for dramatic authors—'Wallace'—Major Cartwright—Progress in public opinion—Vandenhoff—'Mirandola'—Engagement of Miss Atkins at Bristol—Partial restoration of Shakespeare's text in Richard III.—John Kemble—Wainwright—'Damon and Pythias'—Character of Hamlet—Henry IV.—Portrait by Jackson—Story of the child saved from fire—Country engagements—Highland tour—Second Covent Garden engagement—Difficulties in the management—Cassius—Othello.

THE close of this season found me in a very different position from that in which I had stood at its opening. Engagements from country managers poured in upon me, and filled up the whole term of my vacation before I left London. Through the interest of the Duke of York, the patent of the Dublin Theatre had been given by George IV. to Mr. Henry Harris, who fitted up the Rotunda as a temporary theatre (capable of holding about two hundred) until the new one he had to build should be completed. My summer engagements began there, where the performance of 'Virginius' made quite a sensation. It was acted to crowded houses seven nights out of the ten, to which my stay was limited. Sheil reached Dublin from circuit in time to be present at one of the representations. After the play he came and sat down beside me in the green-room, and was silent for some time: at length, "Well, Macready," he began, "what am I to say to you? I really don't know; there is nothing I have seen like it since Mrs. Siddons!" Such an eulogy from such a judge was worth to me the acclamations of a crowded theatre.

My route lay onward to Newcastle-on-Tyne, and from a

severe hurt in my knee, got by a fall at Dublin, I was obliged to travel in post-chaises and as rapidly as I could bribe the post-boys to go. My old friends there welcomed me with the old cordiality, and, as in Dublin, I continued to reap a rich harvest. From thence to Aberdeen was my point of travel, and, on account of my wounded knee and the necessity of journeying all night, I hired a carriage at Newcastle, setting out after the play on Saturday night. On Saturday midnight I reached Woodhaven on the shore of the Firth of Tay, where I had to wait two hours for the tide to cross to Dundee. Dressing and breakfasting at Montrose, I reached Aberdeen about noon, where I saw my name announced in the playbills for Richard III. as I passed from my hotel to the theatre. Two young girls were walking up and down the stage, apparently waiting for the business of the morning to begin. One, the manager's daughter, was a common-looking person; the other, plainly but neatly dressed, was distinguishable for a peculiar expression of intelligence and sprightly gentleness. She rehearsed with great propriety the part of the Prince of Wales, and was introduced to me by the manager as my Virginia for the next night's play. On the following morning she came an hour before the regular summons to go through the scenes of Virginia and receive my instructions. She was dressed in a closely-fitting tartan frock, which showed off to advantage the perfect symmetry of her sylph-like figure. Just developing into womanhood, her age would have been guessed more, but she had not quite reached fifteen. She might have been Virginia. The beauty of her face was more in its expression than in feature, though no want of loveliness was there. Her rehearsals greatly pleased me, her acting being so much in earnest. There was a native grace in her deportment and every movement, and never were innocence and sensibility more sweetly personified than in her mild look and speaking eyes streaming with unbidden tears. I soon learned her little history; she was the support of her family, and was the same little girl whom I had rebuked some years before for supposed inattention at the Glasgow Theatre. My engagement with Mr. Ryder was for three weeks, divided between the towns of Aberdeen, Montrose, Dundee, and Perth; and as the same plays were repeated by the same performers, my opportunities of conversation with this interesting creature

were very frequent, which, as they occurred, I grew less and less desirous of avoiding. Her strong good sense and unaffected warmth of feeling received additional charms from the perfect artlessness with which she ventured her opinions. The interest with which I regarded her I persuaded myself was that of an older friend, and partook of a paternal character. All the advice my experience could give her in her professional studies she gratefully accepted and skilfully applied, showing an aptness for improvement that increased the partiality she had awakened in me. I could have wished that one so purely minded and so naturally gifted had been placed in some other walk of life; but all that might be in my power for her advancement I resolved to do. On the last night of my engagement at Perth I sent for her into my room, and presenting her with the handsomest shawl I could procure in Perth, I bade her farewell, desiring her, if at any time my influence or aid in any way could serve her, to apply to me without hesitation, and assuring her she might rely on always finding a ready friend in me. As I gazed upon her innocent face beaming with grateful smiles, the wish was in my heart that her public career might expose her to no immodest advances to disturb the serenity or sully the purity of her unspotted mind. My way lay far away from her, but her image accompanied me in my southward journey, and, I may say, indeed never after left me.

At Lancaster I acted two nights, reaching Liverpool in good time for my fortnight's engagement. My early arrival allowed me to be present at a public dinner given in aid of the Liverpool Theatrical Fund, at which the mayor, Sir J. Tobin, presided. To this as to all the other provincial theatrical funds I subscribed my £10; but I should have acted more wisely in keeping my money in my pocket. A very considerable sum was accumulated in the course of a few years, which was, unjustly and dishonestly in my opinion, as a manifest diversion from the purpose of the endowment, divided amongst the few remaining members of the fund. If no legitimate claimants for relief were left, it ought to have been transferred to some other similar charity, or the different contributions returned to their subscribers. The fortnight at Liverpool realized for me a handsome sum, though my plays

were very indifferently mounted. The 'sweet Virginia' is thus depicted in the beautiful lines of Knowles:

> "I know not whether in the state of girlhood
> Or womanhood to call her. 'Twixt the two
> She stands, as that were loth to lose her, this
> To win her most impatient. The young year,
> Trembling and blushing 'twixt the striving kisses
> Of parting Spring and meeting Summer, seems
> Her only parallel."

But she was represented in Liverpool by a lady of considerable talent in maternal characters, looking quite old enough to have been the mother of Virginius. These inappropriate assumptions call to remembrance the old player who complained of his manager's "cruelty" in superseding him in the character of the youthful George Barnwell, after he had successfully acted it for upwards of fifty years. The part of Lucius, who brings to Virginius the tidings of the horrible outrage on his child, was entrusted to a Mr. Cartlitch, whose deeply comical tragedy convulsed the audience with laughter, and the actors at rehearsal were scarcely less amused when Mr. Bass as Icilius replied to the playful question, of Virginius "Do you wait for me to lead Virginia in, or will you do it?" "Whichever you please, sir." Notwithstanding, the houses were very good, and I returned to London for my fifth Covent Garden season, set up in funds and with cheering onward prospects.

My first savings went on a long and not uninteresting venture. One of the brothers of a Birmingham family, with whom in early life we had lived in close intimacy, was making preparations for a voyage to Van Diemen's land. With several children, a second wife, who soon added largely to their number, and what amount of money he could scrape together from the sale of a heavily encumbered estate, he looked the future boldly in the face; but by the outlay he had been obliged to make was straitened for the small sum of £200, which I had the satisfaction of lending him. His career was one of continual crosses, against all of which he most manfully held up. He was cheated by the person entrusted with his funds for the purchase of sheep; was kept out of his grant of land for more than six years, obtaining it at last only by parliamentary influence—engaging the interference of the Colonial Secretary;

his ship, which he fitted out for the South Sea whale fishery, was wrecked; and, finally, he had to witness the total destruction by fire of the wooden warehouse he had built for the stowage of all his goods, furniture, and implements—in fact, his entire stock. Even then his constancy did not desert him; under the pressure of manifold ills his spirit never gave way. On hearing of this last disaster I wrote to him in terms of condolence, and with the acquittal of his debt to me. But resolutely and courageously he continued to bear up, until he paid off, principal and interest, every farthing he owed, and, dying, left an excellent fortune, and a name, George Meredith, that is an honour to his descendants. Such a man's history is worth a record as a great example of industry and endurance.

The beginning of this season gave repetitions of the characters of the last—Virginius, Henri Quatre, Rob Roy, &c. The first new ones ordered by the management were Iachimo in 'Cymbeline' (October 18th, 1820), and Zanga in Dr. Young's 'Revenge.' Divided between the two I made little impression in either. In Zanga, October 31st, my earnestness kept the audience in interested attention through the first four acts, and in the triumphant exultation over the fallen Alonzo in the fifth the enthusiasm of the house was raised to a very high pitch, from which point I suddenly and most unaccountably sank down into comparative tameness, and the curtain fell to very moderate applause. In discussing the night's event with Talfourd, Wallace, Procter, and some other friends at one of our customary and very agreeable symposia—at which pasha-ed lobsters, champagne-punch, and lively talk prolonged the pleasure of the evening's triumph, or cheered the gloom of defeat—it was a subject of general surprise, how I could have suffered a success so near its perfect achievement to slip from my grasp; but of the fact there could be no doubt that the result was a failure. I perceived my error when too late, lamenting the neglected opportunity. To Iachimo I gave no prominence; but in subsequent years I entered with glowing ardour into the wanton mischief of the dissolute, crafty Italian.

The reception of 'Virginius' had brought on me a great increase of applications from authors to read their MSS., a task which was accepted by me as an appropriate and positive duty pertaining to my position, and which, although engrossing

much time and attention, was most conscientiously discharged by me to the very end of my public career. It had its compensations to balance the discontent and hostility which sometimes my adverse judgments unwillingly provoked. One instance was singularly curious. A youth who, as head of the town boys, had finished with credit his term at Westminster School, was desired by his father to apply himself to mathematics. Either from presumed incapacity or aversion to the study he peremptorily refused, and his father as peremptorily refused to make him any allowance to go to the University. In this exigency he set about writing a play and procured an introduction to me from my relative, Captain Birch, with the request that I would read it, as it was his sole dependence. In my judgment it was, with some effective dramatic situations, a very clever schoolboy production, but little more. I pressed on him the necessity of greater care and more force in the language, and suggested alterations which, when made, failing to satisfy me, I endeavoured to dissuade him from reliance on it. But the case was a desperate one, and he was so urgent in requesting the presentation of his MS. to Mr. Harris that I could no longer resist his entreaties, although with no expectation of the play's acceptance. To my great surprise and very great gratification Mr. Harris did accept, and, put at once into rehearsal, it was produced November 14th under its title of 'Wallace,' and went through sixteen representations to well-filled houses with very considerable applause. It gave Mr. Walker the means of keeping his terms at Oxford, where he took his degree, supporting himself through his college course by his dramatic writings, and indebted to his own industry and perseverance alone for this important step in life. His acknowledgments were made to me in the dedication of his play.

To the interest I took in its production I owed the acquaintance of Major Cartwright, who, as a stickler for Parliamentary Reform, was regarded by his Tory opponents as a monster unfit for human society, and, for mischief and malignity, to be classed with "Scorpion and asp and amphisbæna dire!" The venerable old gentleman was of most polished manners, of almost child-like gentleness, and one of the mildest, most charitable, and philanthropic characters that ever dignified humanity. The Reform Bill of 1832 went very far beyond

his utmost dreams of popular enfranchisement; but democrat, radical, fanatic, Jacobin, were terms too good and an action at law too gentle a correction for the good old man. We have lived in an age of change; but in none of the alterations brought about by the wisdom and eloquence of our leading statesmen has the improvement of our social condition been more distinctly proved than in the tempered tone of political discussion. Opinion is no longer subject to legal persecution. With the disappearance of Sidmouths, Wilson Crokers, &c., the conduct of our institutions has been liberalised. *Ex-officio* proceedings are become a dead letter. Whilst at issue on the choice of means for effecting a public benefit, party feeling can now admit sincerity of conviction and honesty of purpose in opposite opinions. The law of progress is now universally accepted as God's law, and the question of debate is only, which may be the safer way of carrying it into effect.

The Covent Garden managers neglected no opportunity of enlisting recruits that might be likely to add strength to their corps, and with this view entered into an engagement with Mr. Vandenhoff, who had obtained a considerable provincial reputation. He made his *début* in Tate's version of 'King Lear,' December 9th, and was received with applause: he performed afterwards Sir Giles Overreach once, Coriolanus twice, and Rolla once; later in the season he appeared in a melodrama that was acted five nights, after which he retired from the theatre.

The next novelty of the season was Barry Cornwall's 'Mirandola.' Its history was peculiar. He began it by writing the second act, the dramatic power and interest of which made me urgent with him to piece out so excellent a sample into a perfect whole. He then proceeded with the first. The catastrophe, similar to that of 'Don Carlos,' 'Parisina,' &c., was already settled; but, on the intervening scenes, occupying the third, fourth, and part of the fifth acts, and forming the intrigue of the story, he could not satisfy himself. In despair he wished me to draw out a plot to fill up this extensive chasm. I made a draft of the scenes, acting over to him in familiar words the passion of each. There were certainly many grounds of objection to be taken to it, but, hemmed in between two points of a story, it was no easy work so to adjust events as

exactly to fill up a given space. He wished me to consult Sheil on it, which I did, and brought him back Sheil's decisive opinion that the dilemma did not admit of any better plan of extrication. *Faute de mieux* he went to work upon it, and, as they were struck off, scene by scene was subjected to criticism and alteration till the whole was completed. It was produced January 9th, 1821, for nine nights acted to overflowing houses, and Barry Cornwall received £300 from Warren for the copyright. But during the remaining seven nights of its run the wind was taken out of our sails by the appearance of Miss Wilson at Drury Lane as Mandane in 'Artaxerxes,' who became the attraction of the town for twenty nights from the report of George IV. having heard and praised the new vocalist.

About this time I received from Mr. Atkins, the father of the young actress who had so won upon my favour in Scotland, a request that I would recommend his daughter to some respectable theatre on the expiration of her engagement with Mr. Ryder. I could answer for her kindly treatment nowhere so securely as at Bristol, and on my recommendation she with her family was received there, where she continued for two years her course of improvement. On her route through London she called with her father to thank me, and impressed on me more deeply the opinion I had formed of her innocence and amiability.

My professional career was now no longer subject to the painful anxieties which each new attempt had formerly cost me. I was established as the leading tragedian; the principal character therefore in each play fell to me as a matter of course, and it was sufficient incentive to my best exertions to maintain the place I had won.

An alteration of Cibber's adaptation of 'King Richard III.' had been sent to me by Mr. Swift of the Crown Jewel Office, but varying so little from the work it professed to reform, that I was obliged to extend the restoration of Shakespeare's text, and it was submitted (March 12th, 1821) to the public ordeal. The experiment* was partially successful—only partially. To

* *From the Times, March 13th*, 1821.—"At a period when Shakespeare is regarded almost with idolatry, any attempt to rescue the original text of his plays from the omissions and interpolations which successive ages have

receive full justice, Shakespeare's 'Life and Death of King Richard III.' should be given in its perfect integrity, whereby alone scope could be afforded to the active play of Richard's versatility and unscrupulous persistency. But, at the time of which I write, our audiences were accustomed to the coarse jests and *ad captandum* speeches of Cibber, and would have condemned the omission of such uncharacteristic claptraps as

> "Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!"

or such bombast as

> "Hence, babbling dreams: you threaten here in vain.
> Conscience, avaunt! Richard's himself again!"

In deference to the taste of the times, the passages as well as similar ones were retained. At a later period, if the management of Covent Garden in 1837-9 had been continued, the play, with many others, would have been presented in its original purity.*

It was in the early spring of this year an occurrence took place that was destined to darken the fortunes of this once

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accumulated, must at least be viewed with favour; with that feeling we witnessed last night the representation of his 'Life and Death of King Richard III.,' which was announced to be, with a few necessary deviations, the text of the author. How far this might have been deemed by the public an improvement on Cibber's alteration, which has so long maintained possession of the stage, we are unable to state, as the condition has not been complied with by a strict adherence either to the words of Shakespeare or to the order of his scenes. The performance of last night was merely another arrangement and certainly inferior in dramatic effect to that of Cibber. . . . The only scene of much value was that of the Council and the condemnation of Hastings. Macready was not so cool and indifferent as he should have been in his previous conversation with the Council, but the burst of anger on baring his arm was terrific. His Richard is a performance of great merit, and would be still more complete, if he always retained his self-command."

* *From the Morning Herald, March 13th*, 1821.—"We shall restrict ourselves to noticing only the one principal scene now brought for the first time on the stage—that of the Council, in which Richard orders out Hastings for immediate death. It afforded the display of uncommon power. The artful vehemence with which the actor stunned the Council and the accused, the picturesque effect, and reality (if we may so express it) of illusion, with which he bared his arm, as the witness of his wrongs, and the masterly control with which he governed himself in the very whirlwind of declamation, produced upon the audience one of those electric effects, which are but rarely witnessed, and which it is delightful to share."

flourishing theatre, to break up a company of actors and actresses that presented a phalanx of talent unequalled, perhaps, in the history of the stage, and ultimately to reduce this splendid property to a state of irredeemable insolvency. From the date of the O. P. riots the proprietors had to struggle against the building debt, which in adverse seasons pressed heavily upon them. By dint of extraordinary exertions, managerial tact, and an untiring spirit of enterprise, the greater part of this was now paid off; and there was every reason to believe that a few more years would see the property disencumbered. But, until that wished-for consummation, each partner was personally liable to the creditors; and as John Kemble from his age could not look forward to derive much profit from its successes, he was enduring a responsibility and incurring danger with no adequate prospect of compensation. He therefore, very discreetly, came from Lausanne, where he was residing, and by deed of gift made a transfer of his share, one-fourth, to his brother Charles, to whom it had always been expected he would bequeath it. Some newspapers made a scene of the transaction, ending with the brothers "falling into each other's arms;" but to John Kemble the surrender was virtually a release, whilst to Charles, who had no property to tempt a creditor's legal process, it might afford an opening to the management whereby he might gratify his ambition in acting characters to which he had hitherto vainly aspired. In comedy he was without a rival; in tragedy he was first-rate in second-rate parts, but never could be content with this position: with the universal and liberal approbation awarded to his performance of Cassio and Macduff, repining at the cold reception given to him in Macbeth and Othello. It was on this occasion I met John Kemble at dinner at Fawcett's. Charles Kemble, Henry Harris, Vernon, the munificent donor of the gallery, and Baldwin, the breeches'-pocket representative for Totness, made up the party. John Kemble was interesting and amusing in his reminiscences of Dr. Johnson, and some other worthies of his early days. It was the last time I ever saw him.

I am reminded of another dinner at which I met some memorable persons this year, at the house of a man who subsequently obtained a dreadful notoriety by the name of

Wainwright. He was then an artist, a disciple and imitator of Fuseli, and a *littérateur*, living in handsome rooms in Great Marlborough Street, and supposed to possess some property. At his table were Hazlitt, Cary, the translator of Dante—Procter, I think—and some other literary men. He was a contributor to Scott's 'London Magazine,' under the signature of Janus Weathercock. For some years after his disappearance from London, fearful suspicions were afloat concerning him on account of the mysterious deaths of his wife's uncle and his sister-in-law, whose life was heavily insured in many of the London offices. He had taken refuge on the Continent, where he underwent imprisonment for three months on a charge of having poison in his possession for which he could not give a satisfactory account. It was full twenty years after my brief acquaintance with him in London, that, in going over Newgate prison with my friend Dickens, I looked through an eyelet-hole in one of the cells where were four prisoners, and to my surprise and, I may say, horror, among them distinguished the features of this wretched Wainwright. Having pleaded guilty to the charge of forgery, he was sentenced to transportation and sent to New South Wales, with the suspicion of several murders very strong against him. He died there in one of the hospitals.

There were some checks to the attractive course of this Covent Garden season, but it proved a very prosperous one at its close. In a *mélange* that was called Shakespeare's 'Tempest,' with songs interpolated by Reynolds among the mutilations and barbarous ingraftings of Dryden and Davenport, and sung by Miss Stephens and Miss M. Tree, I had to act, May 15th, 1821, the remnant that was left of the character of Prospero, but not for many nights. The tragic play of 'Damon and Pythias,' written originally by Banim, but so amended and added to by Sheil as to make it a joint production, was accepted by Mr. Harris, and acted May 28th with very great applause. The single well-known incident on which it is based did not give scope for the development of strong individual character, though there were in it scenes of thrilling interest. Charles Kemble acted Pythias remarkably well, and to myself, from the effect of the performance of Damon, the play gave additional popularity. It was dedicated to me by the authors, and I had

every reason to be satisfied with its production, but it did not unfortunately swell the treasury's receipts, and its run was in consequence limited to seven nights.

And now came on one of the most searching of those trials in the player's life that test and stamp his qualifications as the personator of distinctive characters; that put to proof, in no ordinary degree, the accuracy of his perceptions, the correctness of his judgments, his penetration into the innermost depths of thought and feeling, and, withal, his powers of execution. Hamlet was announced for my benefit on the 8th of June, 1821. Upon this wonderful creation of Shakespeare, in which the language is so often a disguise for the passion beneath it, more has been written than probably on any other character, real or fictitious, within the whole range of literature. But are we indebted to the poet's numerous commentators for the unravelling what seems mysterious in it, and rendering clear what might be obscure in the text; or are we not, in the generality of his critics, made sensible of the vain ambition to obtain credit for critical sagacity, and to gain distinction by the association of their smaller names with the great one of the author?

> "Letting their little barks attendant sail,
> Pursue the triumph and partake the gale."

Of most, with the exception of Coleridge, Tieck, Goethe, and Schlegel, I believe, this may be said. To illustrate and to interpret the poet's thought is the player's province, and conscientiously to labour to this end is the only ennobling and elevating duty which the practice of his art delegates to him. I have before observed that no actor possessed of moderate advantages of person, occasional animation, and some knowledge of stage business can entirely fail in the part of Hamlet; the interest of the story and the rapid succession of startling situations growing out of it compel the attention of the spectator, and irresistibly engage his sympathy. But to make the mind of Hamlet apparent, to render his seeming inconsistencies reconcilable and intelligible, is the artist's study; and a task to which the majority of players, content with the applause which a dexterous employment of stage trick is certain to obtain, rarely aspire. My meditations on the character continued to the close of my career, and I will defer

the exposition of my views upon it to the record of my last performance, if I am permitted to complete the registry of my life's doings. On this occasion the theatre was crowded, and the applause throughout the play most enthusiastic. It was a great satisfaction to me; and a supper given at Talfourd's chambers in the Temple was a most agreeable wind-up to an eventful day.

The approaching coronation of George IV., 19th July, 1821, for which preparations had been making during the past year, occupied general attention, fifty-eight years having passed since a similar show had been exhibited. Of course the theatres took advantage of it, Covent Garden anticipating its pageantry in the crowning of King Henry V. in Shakespeare's historical play of the 'Second Part of King Henry IV.,' and Elliston waiting for the performance of the Fourth George in Westminster Abbey in order to present as faithful a copy of it as the dimensions of Drury Lane Theatre would allow. In King Henry IV. the part of the King was sent to me. John Kemble had revived the play in 1804, but produced little effect in the dying Bolingbroke, which was owing, as Harris informed me, to his being "too sick;" he was "only partially and imperfectly heard." Garrick had not given the prominence he had expected to the part; and for these reasons, and believing the audience would be impatient for the show with which the play was to end, I begged hard to be excused from appearing in it. But my objections were set aside, and very properly; it was necessary to support the cast with the whole strength of the company, and I could not be left out of the leading tragic part. To every line in it I gave the most deliberate attention, and felt the full power of its pathos. The audience hung intently on every word, and two distinct rounds of applause followed the close of the soliloquy on sleep, as I sank down upon the couch. The same tribute was evoked by the line, "Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought!"—which, I may say, was uttered directly from the heart. The admission of the perfect success of the performance was without dissent, and it was after being present at one of its representations that Lord Carlisle wished me to be introduced to him. He had seen and remembered Garrick in the part, and said very kind things of me in reference to it. He presented me with the volume of his

poems, so unmercifully dealt with by Lord Byron; wished me to see his Zoffanys, which are amongst the best specimens of the artist; and gave me a very pressing invitation to visit him in the vacation at Castle Howard. The revival of the play rewarded the managers with houses crowded to the ceiling for many nights, nor was this attributable to the pageant only, for the acting was of the highest order. Farren as Shallow, Emery as Silence, Blanchard as Pistol, Charles Kemble as the Prince of Wales, Mrs. Davenport as Dame Quickly, were admirable. Fawcett was the best Falstaff then upon the stage, but he more excelled in other characters.

Mathews, so distinguished for his powers of mimicry, had more than once expressed his intention of adding a portrait of myself to his gallery of theatrical notables, and, entertaining a high opinion of him and liking him very much, I determined to present him with one. Jackson went to see me in Henry IV., the character in which I proposed to sit to him. The picture had made considerable progress, when Fawcett called with me one day to see it. On coming out from Jackson's studio, he exclaimed, "Why, William, you must not give that picture away—Jackson has never done anything like it!" When I reported this to Jackson, his quiet answer was, "Well: it is very easy to paint another; you would not mind paying for the ground-colours being rubbed in by another hand, would you?" My objections were vain to this proposal of my most liberal friend. His pupil made a rough copy of the picture, which Jackson, putting the first draft aside, finished at once. I sent it with a kind note to Mathews, from whom I received this answer:

"Dear Macready,—It is not in my power to express satisfactorily to myself my feelings of surprise and pleasure on the receipt of your splendid present, and the gratifying letter that accompanied it. The value of the one is very much enhanced by the other, and in this hurried acknowledgment (for Colonel Wigston is waiting while I write, as I understood you had left England early yesterday morning) I feel unable to express as I ought the gratification I feel on the unexpected occasion of your liberality and gratifying assurances of friendship, which from a man like yourself I feel particularly welcome to my self-love. The picture is a most beautiful work of art, and a perfect resemblance. A Garrick was removed to make room for it in an hour after my return home on Saturday evening. It was seen by many persons yesterday and universally admired. It is as great an ornament to my gallery as its original is to the profession and sphere he moves in.

"Believe that you have much gratified me, and I look forward on my return to England with great satisfaction to the assurance you have given me that I may have more opportunities than hitherto of increasing that friendship which I shall feel an honour to retain.

"Believe me, dear Macready, very gratefully and sincerely yours,

"HIGHGATE HILL, *July* 1*st*." "C. MATHEWS.

The original painting was not replaced on the easel until late in the year, when it was finished and exhibited at the British Gallery, Pall Mall, where it was pronounced a specimen of colouring equal to the best of the Flemish school.*

It was in the month of May in this year that the first number of a theatrical periodical entitled the 'Dramatic Enquirer' or 'Examiner'—I forget the exact name it bore—was sent to me with "the Editor's compliments." The frontispiece was a portrait of myself in the character of Henri Quatre. The face had been copied from Jackson's drawing of Virginius, but the hair was turned back on the head, and armour on the chest and shoulders was substituted for the folds of the Roman drapery. The leading article was a biographical sketch of myself, exceedingly complimentary on my recent successes, but the utter amazement I felt in reading a romantic story, circumstantially detailed, of my rescue of a child from the flames of a burning house in Birmingham, may be well imagined. I retraced the past events of my bustling life, but among them there was nothing to support or justify this extraordinary invention. Fearful of its being supposed that I had in any degree participated in giving currency to such a fiction, I called next morning at the office of the publication in Catherine Street, Strand, requesting to see the Editor. He was "not within, but any message I might have for him," the woman, a respectable-looking person who had charge of the office, assured me she would "punctually convey." Accordingly, referring to the article in the magazine, I begged her to inform the Editor that no such circumstance as that related of the fire had ever occurred, and that it was my particular request he would in his next number give a direct contradiction to the statement. She promised faithfully to

* Jackson's portrait of Macready in the character of Henry IV. will ultimately, under his bequest, be placed in the National Portrait Gallery, as also will the marble bust of him by Behnes. The duplicate of the portrait, given to Mathews, is in the collection of the Garrick Club.—ED.

repeat my words; but at the same time stated her conviction that the Editor had received the account from what he considered "unquestionable authority." I was earnest in repeating my denial and my hope that the next number would set the truth before the public. I heard no more of the publication, and fancy it must have died in its birth from the paucity of its readers: but not so the story it had promulgated, as the sequel will show.

The attraction of the coronation in 'Henry IV.' was so great that Covent Garden Theatre was kept open beyond the usual period of its season—to my loss, having very lucrative country engagements in prospect; some I was prevented from fulfilling and obliged to relinquish. Being announced to appear at Birmingham on Monday, July 30th, 1821, I was greatly embarrassed by the continuance of my name in the Covent Garden playbill for King Henry IV. on the same evening. I had no alternative but to set off, after acting at Covent Garden on Saturday, and travel all night (there were no railways or telegrams then) to see Mr. Bunn, the Birmingham manager, on the Sunday, and explain to him the dilemma in which I was placed. It was thereon decided that my appearance at Birmingham should be deferred to the Wednesday, and he went back with me in my carriage to London, travelling again through the night; all was amicably settled. I acted in London on Monday and Tuesday, and by another night journey was able to begin a very profitable fortnight's engagement at Birmingham on the next day, Wednesday, in the part of Virginius. From thence to Nottingham; on to Derby, to Cheltenham, Halifax, and Liverpool, where I remained three weeks, putting money in my purse, and, in all the high spirits of health and youth, enjoying the prosperity of my career. This brought me up to the middle of September, when I had set apart a fortnight for the enjoyment of a holiday after my hard work, and another gaze upon that lovely and grand Highland scenery which had so impressed its pictures on my memory, and which I can even now with pleasure call up before me. My young friend Walker, who had accepted an invitation to accompany me in my short Highland tour, met me at Liverpool, and we proceeded together to Glasgow; I spent a couple of days there with my friends, Knowles and John Tait,

and, uniting business with pleasure, entered into an agreement with the managers of the theatre to act there two nights on my return from Argyleshire. My intention had been to visit Staffa and Icolmkill; but this the stormy state of the weather prevented. We took with us the eldest son of Knowles, a fine lad of twelve years of age, since dead in India. We made our way down the Clyde to Dumbarton and Loch Lomond, and up the lake as far as Tarbert, from whence, round the head of Loch Long, we ascended the wild pass of Glencroe, which brought us down to Cairndow on the shores of Loch Fine. Crossing the Lake to Inverara, we were here provided with a very stylish tilbury and good saddle-horse, sent forward from Glasgow to meet us. Alternating the drive and ride, we spent ten very pleasant days in a hurried tour by Dalmally on Loch Awe, Tyndrum, Loch Earn Head, Callander, Loch Katrine, Port Menteith, Stirling, and back to Glasgow. But for the perfect enjoyment of romantic scenery the tourist must be content to rough it in his daily walk of 20 or 30 miles with his knapsack at his back; his "foot must be like arrow free," that in his struggles upwards to the mountain's top, and in his extensive survey of the world of beauty stretched around and far below him, the excitement of his spirits as they drink in the spectacle may make him conscious of pleasure in the mere feeling of existence. Horses and carriage may be to some a luxury, but to the lover of nature they become in such scenes a positive encumbrance. I experienced the truth of this in contrasting with my former pedestrian ramble, the gayer turnout on this occasion. At Glasgow I recommenced to well-filled houses my "starring" course, pursuing it through Carlisle, Richmond in Yorkshire, Scarborough and Whitby, indulging in those places my appetite for the picturesque and beautiful in the noble ruins and striking scenery that give interest to them, whilst with every change of billet my banker's account was steadily improving, to which the theatres of Leicester, Nottingham, and Manchester very liberally also contributed.

But the time had arrived when I could no longer delay giving a direct answer to the overtures of Mr. Harris. My first Covent Garden engagement of five years expired with the last season, and he was anxious to secure my services for a similar term. Young was re-engaged, therefore a personal conference

with the manager seemed to me necessary to perfect the understanding between us, and accordingly I hurried up to London and met him with Mr. Reynolds. He was frank and friendly, and very few words were needed to make our compact mutually satisfactory. I required the highest salary given in the theatre, to which he admitted I was entitled, and "should have it." In a brief conversation he explained to me the cause of the maximum salary being reduced from £25 per week to £20, "at which both Young and Miss Stephens were then engaged;" and in signing my agreement at £20 per week for five years, he pledged his word under witness of Mr. Reynolds, that "if any regular performer in the theatre should receive more than that sum, my payment should be immediately raised to the same amount." This ill-advised measure of linking together a written and a verbal contract was in the issue fraught with consequences of a very distressing nature: but the signatures were affixed, and being under an engagement to act six nights with my friend Mr. Mansel at Hull, it was arranged that I should appear at Covent Garden in 'Virginius' on Monday, November 26th, 1821.

I now took the upper part of a house in Berners Street, No. 67, and entered on my second Covent Garden engagement. Great was the difference in my circumstances and position from my entrance on the first. I had now invested some little sums, and could count many and ardent friends where then I had scarcely an acquaintance. The doubt and apprehension under which I ventured on each primary essay were now succeeded by confidence in the just or indulgent appreciation of my audience, whenever by diligence and resolute endeavour I might make myself master of the subjects of my study; I shared with Young the station of leading tragedian, and in all respects we stood on a perfect equality. But it was so much the more imperatively necessary that no effort towards continued improvement should be relaxed, and with this renewed determination I awaited the events of time. There was little of theatrical interest in the early part of the season at either theatre. Kean at Drury Lane made trial of several characters: one in a new tragedy called 'Owen, Prince of Powys,' written, I believe, by Miss Jane Porter—a sad failure; others in old stock plays, productive of little effect; but in the

revival of Joanna Baillie's 'De Montfort,' with alterations by the authoress, he shone out in the full splendour of his genius. The play was, however, with all its great merit, too heavy and gloomy to be attractive, and its early withdrawal deprived me of the satisfaction of witnessing a performance which was spoken of as singularly triumphant. At Covent Garden the dramatic romance of the 'Exile,' in which Young gave unusual prominence to the part of Daran, was brought out with the pageant of a coronation, and had a very long run. My appearances were in consequence infrequent, and limited to characters with which the town was familiar.

In the course of the two past seasons I had made several excursions to my father's theatre at Bristol, where crowded houses almost invariably welcomed me. These visits brought more particularly under my notice the young actress, Miss Atkins, who had so won upon my interest. In her unaffected pathos and sprightliness I had seen the germ of very rare talent, and was anxious its development should not be marred by any premature attempt. The counsel which, in consequence, I sought to impress on her led to frequent conversations and eventually to correspondence, which I tried to make instrumental to the advancement of her education, and then it was, in my own case as no doubt in hers, that "love approached me under friendship's name," although unsuspected and unconfessed in either of us.

It was in this season that, at Charles Kemble's instigation, exceptions to the management of Mr. Harris were taken by the other proprietors, and hostilities aroused that led in the sequel to the ruin of the property. The grave has closed over all the parties at issue in the conflict, and I have no wish to touch on any of the accusations retorted between them beyond what may be necessary to explain the embarrassing position in which their dispute placed me. The main facts are these:—Charles Kemble, now a co-proprietor, was desirous of obtaining sway in the management, to which Mr. Harris, the owner of one-half and a fraction of the concern, refused to assent. The threat of a suit in Chancery was so far effectual in bringing the parties to terms of settlement that a lease between them was decided on. The malcontents—Charles Kemble, Willet, Captain Forbes, R.N., and the representatives of Mrs. Martindale—proposed to

take it. Mr. Harris demanded a rent of £12,500 per annum for seven years. Upon the rejection of these terms, Mr. Harris offered to take the theatre upon the same terms. This was not the object of the dissenting party, the management of the establishment was what they aimed at; and, accordingly declining the tender of Mr. Harris, they consented to become the lessees of Covent Garden Theatre at the annual rent of £12,500 for a term of seven years. Unluckily for Mr. Harris, upon their signatures to an agreement to sign the same lease, he gave them possession, instead of waiting for the complete execution of the legal document. The transfer was so far effected that the committee, as these lessees were now styled, entered officially on the new premises and on their new office utterly and, unhappily, ignorant of the business they had taken in hand. One of the first duties incumbent on them in taking office was to acknowledge and guarantee the performers' engagements. As a stipulation, verbally given, made an important part of mine, Charles Kemble wished to have from Mr. Harris his confirmation of my statement, and with my ready consent the point was to remain in abeyance until it could be submitted to and acknowledged by him. The committee was not ostensibly "the management:" Charles Kemble as "acting manager" being "viceroy over them," and Fawcett, whose alleged incompetency had been one of their main grounds of complaint, was retained in his office of "*stage* manager" and invested with more power than before. The appearance of Charles Kemble in the 'School for Scandal' late in March was the only notification of any change having taken place.

The season dragged its slow length along, but received an impetus from the performance of 'Julius Cæsar,' Young acting Brutus; myself, Cassius; Charles Kemble, Mark Antony; and Fawcett, Casca. The receipt of the first night exceeded, it was said, £600, and the house was crowded to its several repetitions. On this occasion I entered *con amore* into the study of the character of Cassius, identifying myself with the eager ambition, the keen penetration, and the restless envy of the determined conspirator, which, from that time, I made one of my most real personations.

A very bad play by George Colman, called 'The Law of Java,' in which Young, Liston, Fawcett, Jones, Miss M. Tree,

and Miss Stephens had parts, was not calculated to raise the spirits of the lessees. It was a complete failure, and determined them on closing the theatre a fortnight earlier than usual: the benefits were accordingly brought on without delay. Young took King John, in which I acted Hubert for him. He was most earnest in his acknowledgments to me, not only for acting the part, but for the manner in which, in his great scene, I placed myself upon the stage to give prominence to his effects. 'Othello' I chose for my benefit, Young volunteering himself for Iago, or anything else; as he said, "Whatever I might wish him to do I had but to name it." Our rivalry was always maintained on the most gentlemanly footing. My house was great, and my improved representation of the Moor* strengthened my hold on public opinion.

My summer vacation I desired to spend in a tour through Italy, hoping to find suggestions in my own art from the contemplation of the great works of sculpture and painting which I could only see there. I set to work intently on the language, which I did not consider difficult. My friend Fawcett went with me to Ransom's Bank, where I procured my letters of credit, and where I was introduced to Douglas Kinnaird, who in the kindest manner gave me letters to his brother Lord Kinnaird at Naples, and to Lord Byron, then at Pisa.

* *From the Times, May 29th*, 1822.—"Mr. Macready last night performed Othello for his benefit, an undertaking of no small peril, while the excellence of Mr. Kean in the character is fresh in the public mind. Mr. Macready, however, without any imitation of Mr. Kean, and without disturbing the noble impressions which he has left on our memory, succeeded in giving a representation of the part, abounding with individual traits of grandeur and of beauty, and forming altogether a consistent and harmonious whole."

From the Morning Herald, May 29th, 1822.—"*Covent Garden Theatre.*—'Othello was performed at this theatre last night, for the benefit of Mr. Macready. If it were possible that Mr. Macready could add any new claim to public favour, it certainly would be his performance of Othello last night. He called forth all his powers, and most successfully, to personate the unhappy husband, suspecting but yet 'strongly loving.' It would be difficult to select any part of the performance in which Mr. Macready excelled, with such ability and such a just conception did he sustain the whole, which frequently called forth the loudest applause from the audience."

CHAPTER XV.

1822.—Continental tour—Paris—Mars, Potier, Duchesnois, Talma, Lafond, at the Théâtre Français—Dijon—Geneva—Lausanne—Villeneuve—St. Maurice—The Simplon—Lago Maggiore—Milan—Iron Crown at Monza—Verona—Tomb of Juliet—Vicenza—Padua—Arquà—Painful pilgrimage to the shrine of Petrarch—Venice—An Italian actor—Bologna.

With the best travelling companions, youth and good spirits, and the enlivening anticipations of a world of beauty before me, I set out on my journey. At Paris I quartered at the Hôtel du Prince Regent, Rue Ste. Hyacinthe, a small street off the Rue St. Honoré, where I found a quiet and moderate *table d'hôte*, and all necessary aids towards acquainting myself with the lions of the French capital, of which the Louvre was my principal attraction, part of almost every morning being spent in the study of its splendid galleries. Talma was ill, and expressed his regret at being prevented from seeing me. I visited of course the theatres, and at the Français witnessed with delight the performances of the charming Mdlle. Mars. Her voice was music, and the words issuing from her lips suggested to the listener the clear distinctness of a beautiful type upon a rich vellum page. It was a luxury to the ear to drink in the "dulcet and harmonious breath" that her utterance of the poet gave forth. Nor was her voice her only charm: in person she was most lovely, and in grace and elegance of deportment and action unapproached by any of her contemporaries. Potier was the favourite comedian of the day, and in genuine humour was unrivalled either on the French or English stage. Mdlle. Duchesnois and Lafond, in Voltaire's tragedy of 'Alzine,' furnished the best examples of the declamatory style of the French school of acting; but the genius of Talma (whom I saw at a

subsequent period) rose above all the conventionality of schools. Every turn and movement as he trod the stage might have given a model for the sculptor's art, and yet all was effected with such apparent absence of preparation as made him seem utterly unconscious of the dignified and graceful attitudes he presented. His voice was flexible and powerful, and his delivery articulate to the finest point without a trace of pedantry. There was an ease and freedom, whether in familiar colloquy, in lofty declamation, or burst of passion, that gave an air of unpremeditation to every sentence, one of the highest achievements of the histrionic art. It is a custom with many actors purposely to reach their dressing-rooms in just sufficient time to go on the stage, in order to avoid the nervousness which waiting for their entrance occasions. But Talma would dress some time before, and make the peculiarities of his costume familiar to him; at the same time that he thereby possessed himself more with the feeling of his character. I thought the practice so good, that I frequently adopted it, and derived great benefit from it. His object was not to dazzle or surprise by isolated effects: the character was his aim; he put on the man, and was attentive to every minutest trait that might distinguish him. To my judgment he was the most finished artist of his time, not below Kean in his most energetic displays, and far above him in the refinement of his taste and extent of his research, equalling Kemble in dignity, unfettered by his stiffness and formality.

But with Italy before me, I grudged each day that detained me in Paris. In the coupé of the diligence, with my Italian grammar and books in my *petit sac*, at which I was constantly working, I made my way to Dijon, and from thence over the Jura towards Geneva. To one of an enthusiastic temperament keenly alive to the sublimity and beauty of the varying scenes that rise in quick succession to the view throughout this picturesque route, this journey must be one of rapture. Few incidents occurred to break in on my enjoyment of it. Some posts before reaching Dijon, I was startled about midnight out of my short sleep by the postillion lashing his team—five horses—into a furious gallop down a short and rapid descent of the road, and urging their speed upward on the opposite steep acclivity. It seems he had observed in the moonlight against

the horizon the figures of two men waiting our approach. One rushed at the leaders, the other endeavoured to lay hold of the wheeler's reins: the first encountered the full shock of the galloping horse, which sent him sprawling on the side of the road, stretched out on his back like a spread eagle; the other followed the carriage shouting for some little distance, but soon gave up the pursuit. I inquired of my companion in the coupé what was the matter, and was not a little surprised at his brief answer, "Monsieur, les voleurs!" a most extraordinary attempt of two men, apparently armed only with bludgeons, upon a diligence loaded with passengers.

At Dijon, where I spent great part of a day in visiting the museum, the cathedral, and other churches, we changed our ponderous diligence for a lighter but not swifter vehicle drawn by three horses. The driver, whose short whip could only reach the haunches of the wheelers, at every ascent in the road dismounted to fill his pockets with stones to pelt the leader of his unicorn team, who showed little sensibility to the uncertain aim of his master's projectiles. Under such charioteering we made, as may be supposed, but slow progress; but the wild grandeur of the scenery would have occupied the mind sufficiently in lingering still longer amidst the Jura's awe-inspiring masses of mountain, rock, and wood. We all alighted to make a foot descent of the mountain of Gex; one of my fellow-travellers, who was walking with me in advance of the rest—an intelligent gentlemanly man, well acquainted with the road—requested me not to "look up" until he gave me the word. I did not well understand this, but on reaching a turn of the hill, where the road opened suddenly over an abrupt cliff, his call to me to "look" disclosed to me a prospect that baffles all power of description: the valley and lake of Geneva bound in with mountains of differing forms and hues, above all which Mont Blanc in its vesture of eternal snow rose majestically into the heavens. Moore's lines upon this wondrous spectacle of loveliness and grandeur have something of prettiness in them, but the idea of a prettiness is an impertinence before such a glory of creation. Wordsworth observed to me, in speaking of it, that he did not think there was on earth another view so gorgeously beautiful. The feeling of entrancement into which it wraps us as we gaze

upon it, is not inadequately expressed in his own lines descriptive of the emotions of a young enthusiast in the presence of Nature's splendours:

> "Sound needed none,
> Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
> The spectacle. Sensation, soul, and form,
> All melted into him; they swallowed up
> His animal being. * * *
> In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,
> Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
> Wrapt into still communion, that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise.
> His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
> That made him; it was blessedness and love."

Under a charm of such potency we resisted as long as we could our conductor's remonstrances at our delay, and would gladly have prolonged our stay to impress, if possible, every feature of the glorious scene indelibly on our memories: but the word "*En route*" was peremptory, and we were obliged to resume our seats in the carriage, which in a short time deposited us at our hotels in Geneva. Illness, the consequence of my own imprudence, left me little time at my own disposal, and in my hurried visit I brought away the distinct remembrance of little beyond the deep blue of the waters of the Rhone as they rushed out of the lake, seeming in their depth of colour as if they would tinge with their own tint whatever they might touch. Forty years have passed since these wanderings were made, and although the objects noted in them present themselves in wonderful freshness to my memory's sight, yet I cannot trust my pen with the record of them here. I was in the state of mind and the season of life to investigate and enjoy; and, wherever I went, I left nothing unobserved that I had time or means of seeing. A few hours only were left to me at Geneva, where I proposed to return; and on the afternoon of the next day I reached Lausanne, where I called on John Kemble. He was reported not visible till the next morning. I wrote a few lines to him, and passed the evening on the lake, enjoying, to its last lingering light, the effect of the most splendid sunset I ever beheld.

Next day my course was through Vevay, where I had not

time to see Ludlow's house by the Castle of Chillon, to Villeneuve, and on to St. Maurice, through a vale of garden beauty. This romantic little town, shut in by overhanging rocks that just afford a passage for the rapid Rhone, crossed by a curious bridge, the construction of which is ascribed to Cæsar, had a peculiar attraction for me. I supped and slept here, and rose early for my onward journey. As some indication of the state of feeling in which I allowed myself to indulge, I extract the following note from my pocket-book, dated "*Sunday, July 13th*, 1822. *St. Maurice.*—It is with extreme unwillingness to leave this romantic scenery that I am expecting the momentary summons for departure. The clock has not yet struck four, and in the deep gloom of twilight, with only the wild rock to look on that rises perpendicularly above me, deepening the uncertain light of morning, my thoughts are driven back upon myself. The roar of the rushing Rhone, softened by distance to a loud but not unpleasing murmur, is all the sound that reaches me except when the solitary scream of some bird breaks the profound stillness. It is here that my heart turns back with fond yearnings to those I love, to those I live for. A crowd of undefinable emotions swell and seem to overcharge my bosom. I cannot find words for what I feel. It is not happiness, but a mixture of sensations, that I think to a better tuned mind should be so. What do I not owe of gratitude for pleasure in scenes like these? and yet there is the alloy of thinking, when I bid them adieu, as I now prepare to do, that I utter the words of an eternal parting." My summons was given, and by Martigny and Sion I reached the poor hotel at Brieg, where at the Simplon's foot I got a first view of the wonderful road which human ingenuity and enterprise have constructed over what to the eye would seem impassable.

Before daylight I was up to accompany my *cocchiere* with his post-waggon over the mountain, but being much in advance of him I had the full advantage of contemplating alone the awful in nature and the wonderful in skill and energy of man—precipices, glaciers, cataracts, bridges, buttresses, and galleries holding the mind in a subdued state of wonder and awe. Unless the traveller through such scenes wrote down a minute account of each particular feature in them, he could convey no idea of any resemblance: no general terms of description

would leave any image on the mind. Our rapid course down the other side through the richest forest scenery brought us to Domo d'Ossola, the extreme point of my conductor's journey. Here some young Frenchmen travelling in a *vettura*, having learned that the banker of the place sought to impose on me in regard to his charges on my letter of credit, persuaded me to come on with them to Milan, to which city the *vetturino* would frank me, paying all personal expenses on the road, to be reimbursed at our journey's end. The bargain was made with the *vetturino* for my conveyance, provisioning, and lodging, and legally ratified by his gift of a *scudo* to me—so vary the customs of countries. Three of my new acquaintances were young men belonging to the French bar, very gentlemanly, very courteous, lively, and agreeable.. The name of one was Moreau, another Guillaume, the third escaped me; but an Italian, whose name I have also forgotten, was known among us, on account of his frequent reference to Rome as his place of birth, as Monsieur Jules César. I accounted myself fortunate in companions, who very much assisted me in correcting my French, whilst Monsieur Jules César rendered me good help in my study of Italian. We made frequent stoppages for the inspection of churches or paintings in them, or some beauty in the landscape. At the Lago Maggiore we spent the greater part of a day visiting the Isola dei Pescatori, a very dirty little island, the Isola Madre, and the most lovely Isola Bella—all seemed enchantment; we were in a region of romance, which Armida might have made her voluptuous retreat, or the Aladdins and Noureddins of Arabian fable have taken in exchange for the palaces and gardens of Bagdad.

On our onward route an incident occurred that, in the altered feelings of Italian nationality, could scarcely, one would hope, happen now. Our driver was dozing on his box as his horses went sauntering along the dusty road, almost as sleepy as himself, when a cart with one horse was driven rapidly past us by a man in a peasant's dress. Our *cocchiere*, instantly waking up, lashed his team into a half-gallop, and soon got up with the poor carter, whom he belaboured with his whip in a most unmerciful manner. My blood was on fire at the oppressive conduct of the fellow, who thus revenged himself for the offended dignity of his more aristocratic vehicle. I was loud

in my exclamations to the poor carter; but one of my companions coolly observed: "Monsieur, ils ne sont pas des hommes dans ce pays-ci!". I rejoice in the belief, that since that day a true sense of the rights and dignity of man has been established in that glorious country.

At Milan we put up at the Croce di Malta, where our landlord paid the expenses of my journey from Domo d'Ossola and installed me in most comfortable airy apartments. A very specious, glibly-speaking fellow came up to my rooms, and with many bows and simpers reminded me that I had left my hat-box in the carriage, which he had brought up to me, hoping I would remember him. I gave the rascal a franc, and was not likely to forget him, finding on opening the box that he had abstracted my travelling-cap from it. "So," thought I, "begins my Italian experience." In Milan there was very much to see. I was up at four in the morning and at the Duomo, that most magnificent pile, by five. I underwent here a curious experience. At home I never could keep my head from giddiness at any unusual point of elevation. Here, after a careful examination of the interior, I descended to the superbly decorated shrine of San Carlo Borromeo, in wonder at the superstition that invests it with a power of sanctity, and from thence, at my *cicerone's* invitation, went up to the roof of the building. So far advanced, I thought I would venture to the next stage; I was again tempted to the next, and so on, up and up, until I found myself at the very top of the highest pinnacle, commanding a prospect on one side of the distant Alps, and the rich plains of Lombardy stretched out upon the other. Among the many objects that attracted my attention in Milan were the Ambrosian Library; the famous fresco of the Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, now nearly obliterated, but restored to life by the burin of Raphael Morghen; the gallery of the Brera, containing among many masterpieces the Sposalizio of Raphael and the affecting picture by Guercino of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. The grand theatre, La Scala, was degraded by the performance of a grotesque ballet, but at the Carcano some very creditable pieces were presented. I accompanied my French friends in their drives on the Corso to the different *trattorias* and *tables d'hôte* to which they resorted in search of the best and most moderate dining-houses—how different from Englishmen!

After some days we parted company, two of them, Guillaume and his friend, returning by Switzerland, and Moreau taking, as far as Florence, the line of march that lay before me. On their departure I joined the *table d'hôte* at my hotel, filled chiefly by my own countrymen, among whom I formed some pleasant acquaintances, and one steady and valued friendship in the person of the lamented Dowling. By application to some officials I obtained an order to see the Iron Crown at Monza, and drove over there (two miles) for the purpose. On reaching the Cathedral where this treasure or talisman is deposited, I was met by a young priest, who announced to me that I was waited for (notice having been forwarded from Milan of the permission granted), and approaching the shrine in a chapel to the right of the high altar I found four others with incense ready. A man (lay) had mounted a ladder, and stood on it before a door in the wall over the altar of the chapel; unlocking it, another of brass richly gilt was seen within, behind this again was a glass one containing the treasure encased in a large gilded cross. Upon its disclosure the priest diffused the smoke of the incense very profusely, making several genuflexions. Two of the priests then ascended the ladder, and with the necessary bendings and curtseyings proceeded to take out the cross, several feet in length, which was richly carved and had six apertures glazed over, within which (the Iron Crown in the centre) were the various relics, sponge, reed, thorns, &c., believed to have been used at the Crucifixion. The Iron Crown, or rather the diadem so called, is not iron, but a band of gold plates connected together by hinges and ornamented with gems: in its centre is a glazed aperture, in which is seen an iron nail supposed to be one of those that pierced the Saviour, from which it has gained the name of the "Iron Crown." The chief priest, after pointing out and descanting on these invaluable relics, reconsigned the cross to the care of the officiating subordinates, who deposited it beneath its threefold guard again. On requesting him to inform me in Latin how these precious memorials came to light, after some hesitation he made out his story that St. Helena had been directed by the Almighty to seek for them, and that on finding them in a cave near Jerusalem, she had distributed portions of them, giving a large share to St. Gregory, who had presented

these, the most valuable, to this church. The crown was said to have been Constantine's. It was no doubt used by the Lombard Kings, and might have been fabricated for the Roman Emperor. Certainly Charles V. testified his faith in it by being crowned with it at Bologna, but I scarcely thought this piece of antiquity with all its guarantees worth the journey and the fee it cost me.

The remainder of my stay at Milan was busily engaged with churches, palaces, and other objects of interest in this noble city, and it was with great regret I turned my back upon it, taking the diligence to Brescia. But before my departure I received a very kind letter from my late fellow-traveller, Moreau, dated Venice, recommending me a good hotel there, and promising to apprise me, throughout my route as I proceeded to Florence, of the best modes of travel and houses of resort. At Brescia I could not extend my stay beyond a few hours, wishing to reach Verona before nightfall. On my journey there the continued cloud of dust obscured every object (if there were any) worth notice except the Lago di Guarda, of which I had frequent and satisfactory views. It reminded me of the Scotch Lakes, to which, except in the luxuriance of its southern banks, I do not think it superior: but that doubt is no mean eulogy. The fort of Peschiera also struck me—as the comparison must every one—between the graceful bendings and winding outlines of nature with the sharp angles and straight lines of military science: besides, it was a fetter on the mountain-spirit—for oppression, not for protection.

On approaching Verona my ruminations led me more to the creations of Shakespeare's genius, than to the sterner characters associated with its history. As I entered the city, admiring the rapid course of the roaring Adige, the thought first on my mind was that she, "the true and faithful Juliet" and he she loved, had looked on the same stream and trod the same steps. I passed through handsome streets and over a singular bridge of three arches to my inn, from whence, when I had emerged from the cloud of dust that, in uncasing myself, I shook out of my clothes, I set out to look around me. I entered the Cathedral, and saw the Assumption of Titian (not like that I afterwards beheld at Venice). But I have seen so

many churches and such richly-adorned ones, that the interest in them grows more and more languid. An extraordinary statue by the father of Paul Veronese caught my attention, the dusk preventing my close inspection of the paintings. In taking a survey from the bridge of the hill opposite, the old citadel, the floating mills upon the river, and the antique buildings of the city, Shakespeare was ever present to me. My *valet de place* directed me to the Amphitheatre, and with a kind of moody pleasure I entered through the porches, where Romans had been of old, to see their degenerate successors occupying its seats to laugh at the buffoonery of some Italian players who were exhibiting in a temporary theatre by daylight. I lingered here until the deepening shadows warned me of the lateness of the hour, and the solitude of the place: for all were gone but my guide and myself. I examined the vomitories and the imperial entrance; I looked at the canal for the naumachia and sauntered slowly away, wrapped in meditation on the capacity of man and his abuse of it. Napoleon had been in triumph there: but the thought of him was a small item among the throng of imaginations that such a scene would evoke. Leaving it in the twilight, I saw the tombs of the Scaligeri; the hall of council, with the statues of Maffei, Vitruvius, and other Veronese worthies; the market-place, with the antique statue in the fountain, and the intended palace of the republic from the designs of Michael Angelo.

But no place was free from the intrusion of visions of the Capuletti and Montecchi, and the beautiful story that grew out of their disturbance of "the quiet of the streets." It was night, when I desired the guide to take me direct to Juliet's tomb. Our long walk had disinclined him for the visit, and he would have dissuaded me from going, insisting that it was nothing to see; to me it was all, it gave an interest to every step I took and every house I passed. My enthusiasm must have warmed into something like anger by the tone in which I ordered him to proceed. We traversed several streets, passed under the wall of the old citadel, and at last emerging from a low and dark archway of some length, pursued our course through a lane between two high garden walls. The luxuriant foliage from one side at times quite overshadowed our path;

and the brightness of the moon, which, piercing through the drooping boughs, at intervals shone upon us, deepened by the darkness of the shade. Another lane exactly similar, into which we turned, brought us to the cottage door, the object of our quest. An old woman answered to our knocking, and led us by the light of a "lanthorn dimly burning" through her miserable habitation, our steps ringing on the hollow floor, into the garden or vineyard beyond. The splendour of the moon, that shone bright in heaven, penetrated the interstices of the vine leaves that were thickly roofed in trellis over our heads. The roaring of the Adige alone broke the silence of the night, which was calm as if there were one rest in heaven and earth; not a leaf stirred near us, and the slow footfall of our steps was heard in clear distinctness. The old woman stopped and held her lantern over a broken stone coffin, said to have been the tomb of her who has become a proverb of loveliness and truth. The place had been formerly the garden of a Franciscan convent, but my guide is responsible for my correctness. It may be—I dare say, is—fabulous, but yet the delusion was too pleasing to be admitted such. I believed that I saw before me the sepulchre of her whom Shakespeare has taught us to picture as one of the fairest and the best, the gentlest and truest, of her sex. In the study of my art I had often drawn to my fancy the image of her beauty, and now I stood like a fond and credulous pilgrim before her shrine, whose imaginary perfections had filled his early visions with delight and love. I drew my slow steps with reluctance from the spot, and when outside the cottage, as I stood in the broad moon-light, looking on the bright planet in full pure glory above me, I thought that so she must have looked, when the love-sick boy invoked her beams in attestations of his truth. I would rather have missed ten galleries of pictures than this one hour of dreamy, idle musing.

The next morning I rose at point of day to leave Verona. I took a last glance at the Amphitheatre, as the carriage wound round it, and looked with regret on the rapid Adige, as we passed over it for Vicenza. The rich fertility of the landscape awoke most pleasing associations. The vines hung gracefully in festoons from tree to tree, clustering and disporting, reminded me of Virgil's rural scenes. The

emotions excited by this continued succession of interesting objects presented to my sight, of those transcendent in art and in the glories of nature, almost bewilder the mind, preventing its sober self-examination: but they leave ineffaceable images behind, which, though passing from the view, are stored up —treasures of memory that time cannot take from me.

My hours were few at Vicenza, where, as in all the Italian cities, churches and palaces abounded, enriched with the works of the great masters that make constant demand on the industrious attention of the traveller; and to these I never failed to apply myself with unwearying diligence. But the name most in the mouths of the *ciceroni* of this city is that of Palladio, who has embellished his birth-place with monuments of his art, that justify the pride with which his name is cherished. Among these the Teatro Olimpico, designed as a model theatre for the ancient drama, is regarded as his masterpiece. It interested me; but I am not a sufficient connoisseur in architecture thoroughly to appreciate its acknowledged excellence. In Padua I made a longer stay, visiting under conduct of a *valet de place* the different churches, where the works of Giotto, Titian, Paul Veronese, &c., are conspicuous. Of the old Amphitheatre there is little to remark beyond its site. The monument at Liraj, and the tomb, said to be of Antenor, could not fail to be noted by me. The many objects of art, architectural (for here Palladio has extended his triumphs), sculptural, and pictorial, employed all my daylight; but the fatigue of my perambulations did not prevent me from attending the theatre in the evening, which, even after the Scala, I thought magnificent. The performance was an opera. I did not learn its title, nor remain to its close, what I saw of it impressing me but very feebly. Before however going there, it was necessary for me to make provision for my projected visit to Arquà on the morrow: a sojourn in Padua, although rich in recollections, would have appeared incomplete to me if it had not comprehended Arquà. The lines of the noble eulogist are familiar to all lovers of poetry:

> "There is a tomb in Arquà: rear'd in air,
> Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
> The bones of Laura's lover; here repair
> Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
> The pilgrims of his genius."

My visit there had all the penance in it that a pilgrim could desire, and certainly was the most unsentimental of any excursion I have ever made. I had had reason in so many instances to complain of the extortion practised on me at the hotels, that I thought the best mode of securing myself from imposition on this occasion was to be my own purveyor for the next day's carriage. Accordingly, I made inquiry respecting the hire at the best stables in the city. The rogues there took their cue from my foreign accent, and being proportionately exorbitant in their charges, so raised my choler as to make me exhaust what I knew of the abusive in the Italian vocabulary in expressing my indignation at their unblushing demands. At last a quiet and seemingly simple fellow agreed to take me and replace me in my *locanda* for eight francs. I inquired of his carriage. Pointing to some standing near that I had rejected, "These," I observed, "are too shabby: is it better than any of these?" Confidently, he replied, "O Corpo di San Tomaso, molto più bella!" "And the horse!" "Eccellente!" "Shall we go quick?" "Prestissimamente!" "Safe!" "Sicuro!" "At 5 o'clock?" "Senza dubbio." "The horse is really good?" "Buonissimo!" All was, as I thought, most satisfactorily arranged, and with the early morning I rose from a very uncomfortable bed in my very uncomfortable inn, delighted with the idea of breathing the fresh morning air in a neat and spruce conveyance and pacing merrily over the campaign to Arquà.

The *vettura* was announced. I was equipped and eager for the expedition. Full of Petrarch and Laura, my imagination revelling in ideas of the beautiful and ardent, the sensitive and romantic, I descended, but stopped short at the door. A carriage was there certainly, which I looked at, quite aghast. It was a rotten, shattered old gig or tim-whisky, it had no springs, and, though corded up in several places, seemed incapable of surviving the shock of starting. It looked as if it had been discharged some months from hospital service, and left to die a natural death by rotting away on some dunghill out of which this rascal must have picked it. The horse was not unworthy of what he was tied to. "Is this the carriage?" in consternation I asked. "Sicuro, signor." There was no alternative—into it I got, my nerves responding

to the creaking and trembling of the rickety affair. My *conduttore* followed; he was a compound of villanous smells, from which I partially defended myself with eau-de-cologne. We made our way through two or three streets, and had just entered a deeply dusty road, running parallel with the ramparts and leading to the city gate, when the horse tripped and made a complete somersault clean out of the shafts, bursting the harness in sundry places. The driver raised the rascally animal, and replacing him between the shafts, we resumed our seats, when he began kicking as if some spirit of evil were in him, and never rested till he had sent the footboard in the air and both of us into the dusty road. "Corpo di San Tomaso!" exclaimed the driver, "è una disgrazia!" Muttering all terms of abuse in my own language, I resigned myself to my destiny. A cord mended the broken tackle, and we once more ventured ourselves in the vehicle, but to little purpose; we were kicked out by this vicious brute on an average every mile and a half, until we reached the foot of the hill leading to Arquà. At every ejectment that we endured from this detestable beast, the *conduttore* adjured the body of his patron saint, San Tomaso di Padova, as he himself informed me. "Is he a good one?" I inquired. "O, buonissimo," he replied, "the best in all Padua."

The level country through which we passed was rich, but not particularly interesting: as we entered the hilly region, the beauty of Italian scenery, in all its mixture of fertility and wildness, of luxuriance and sublimity, broke upon our view. "Grazie a San Tomaso," for our safe delivery, was my silent thought, as we finished our outward-bound course. I left my fellow-sufferer to busy himself with the repairs of harness and carriage and to feed his ill-tempered brute, that he might have spirit enough to kick us back again to Padua. A very intelligent boy, whom I selected from the swarm of ragged urchins that volunteered their services as *ciceroni*, conducted me up the hill to the house of Petrarch. I followed him from room to room with all the veneration which the laurelled genius exacted, saw his chair and secretaire, and added my name to the long list of pilgrims (none had more justly earned that title than myself) who were enrolled in the record of his admirers. I passed on to his tomb, close to the small church of Arquà—a simple, square,

unostentatious monument on steps, with four pillars supporting a stone sarcophagus. The following lines I hastily copied into my pocket-book :—

"Frigida, Francisci lapis hic tegit ossa Petrarcæ,
Suscipe, virgo parens, animam, sate virgine, parce:
Fessaque jam terris, cœli requiescat in arce.
"MCCCLXXIIII. XVIII. JULII."*

Four laurel-trees in full berry grew, one at each corner, overshadowing and adorning with most appropriate gracefulness the modest interesting structure. The view over the far outspreading plains of Lombardy was most extensive, lost in the seemingly interminable expanse of luxuriant vegetation, which contrasted well with the less fertile summits of the hills around me. The grandeur of the landscape, but still more the name and remains of Petrarch, are all that give interest to this secluded spot. Plucking a small branch from one of the laurels, the withered remains of which I still possess, I reascended the crazy, freshly-corded vehicle to go through again the same set of manœuvres that the fractious brute had made us undergo in our journey here. Seven times was I served with notice to quit from the heels of this restive animal, and, as a pleasant finish to this eventful history, my perfumed guide on regaining Padua drove me, covered with dust and perspiring with exertion, passion, and shame at my appearance, through the principal streets, crowded with the gaily-dressed inhabitants, who were flocking, to the sound of the Sunday morning's bell then tolling, to morning mass. My green spectacles and the conviction that no one knew me from Beau Brummell or the Emperor Alexander *incog.*, enabled my *mauvaise honte* to endure this concluding trial; but, oh! the relief in jumping out of this antediluvian piece of patchwork in the yard of my *albergo* is indescribable! I paid the rascal who had trapped me into this purgatorial expedition; gave him, his horse, and San Tomaso di Padova to Old Nick; and, ordering a more respectable *vettura* for Fusina, by ablution and libation washed

* Under this stone the bones of Petrarch rest;
Virgin Mother, receive his soul;
Son of the Virgin, make him whole,
That, weary here, he may with God be blest.
18th July, 1374. ED. TRANS.

away all unpleasant recollections of my poetical pilgrimage, and in a less desperate machine set out on my route to Venice.

The thick grass which overgrew the pavement of the last street before the gate of Omnium Sanctorum was a sad remembrance of the "revolution of the times,"—an eloquent, mournful indication of declension and decay. It was otherwise, I thought, when the noble contended for the independence of his little principality, or when Padua was the home of learning, the popular resort of the wise and the ambitious. The ride along the Brenta's banks, studded with villas and villages, in which were groups of holiday-keepers obstreperous in their noisy mirth, brought me to Fusina, the place of embarkation in gondola for Venice. This was the only mode of reaching it: there were no railways then; and I believe in the whole world there was no city that offered to the traveller's approval a spectacle so imposing as that of Venice. Her peculiarity of situation has been so often descanted on that it may be supposed familiar to every imagination, although no description can do justice to the startling reality, or weaken the crowding sensations that swell the enthusiast's bosom as his gondola glides from between the high banks of the narrow Brenta upon the widely-spreading surface of the Adriatic, and the scene of wonder bursts upon his sight. The setting sun poured its last beams of ruddy light upon the majestic city of the sea, that rose like some fabled work of enchantment from the bosom of the subject flood. The blue summits of the distant Alps on one side, and the scattered islands on the other, closed in the fairy prospect. There was scarcely a ripple on the glittering waters, nor a sound in the air except the far-off tolling of the vesper bells, that came sadly and slowly booming over the expanse. If "the pale moonlight" be in appropriate tone to the moulder-ing grandeur of a Gothic ruin, the hour of sunset does not less truly harmonise with the decaying magnificence of a capital like Venice. She still sits like a queen indeed upon her watery throne, but it is in "faded splendour wan." Her edifices and public places are monuments; no single object speaks of recent achievement. Her spoils from Constantinople, and her trophies set up on the conquests of Cyprus, Crete, and Rhodes, still stand in reproach of her degenerate sons, for the tributary

nations no longer pay her homage, and the Moslem "hath broken the crown of her head."

At the hotel which Moreau had recommended I found good apartments, and, having engaged the services of a *valet de place*, desired him to conduct me to St. Mark's. We traversed the narrow lanes leading to the Piazza, jostling the busy crowd that was hurrying on, earnestness in every face, and importance in every voice that gabbled by us. When at the outside of the Piazza, I dismissed my servant for the night, and, passing on beneath the dark arches, emerged upon the interesting scene. The grand fantastic façade of the church of St. Mark spread out its majestic grandeur at the opposite side of the square: the Campanile pointed its darkly-shadowed spire to the clear deep blue above, which was richly set with stars; the uniform architecture of the square was distinctly visible in the evening's light; and in the illumination of the shops and *cafés*, all of which were lit up, and displayed in almost daylight distinctness the many, many groups, the crowds of persons engaged in conversation, promenading up and down the more vacant spaces, or thronging round the military band who, with their music-stands fixed in a large circle, were playing the most charming airs. I was alone in this, to me, novel scene of splendour, luxury, and beauty. The glories of the night above were again reflected in the sleeping waters of the Adriatic. The thought that I was indeed in Venice was itself a delight to me: Venice, the frequent vision of my youthful fancy, peopled with the grand and terrible realities of history and the glorious and touching fictions of romance and poetry. It was a sort of spiritual intoxication I experienced, yet, with every sense thus gratified, there was a strange overcast of melancholy in the thought that this enjoyment was so soon to end and never again to be renewed.

My time in Venice, limited to one short week, was thriftily employed. Here, as in every city throughout my tour, I gave one or two hours a day to a tutor engaged to assist me in my study of the language, with which I very soon grew familiar. The rest of the day was spent among the splendid works of art that court inspection in the galleries, churches, and palaces adorning this singular city, that begin their date

with the Horses of Lysippus, and, satiating the entranced spectator with the masterpieces of Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, &c., come down to the Hebe of Canova* on view in the Grimani Palace. In Byron's words I was "dazzled and drunk with beauty," and moving as in a dream made up of memories and associations. The creations of Shakespeare rose up before me on the Rialto; and the Hall of Council, indeed, haunted me at every step. The tombs of the Doges, the Giant's Staircase, the Place of the Lion's Mouth, the Bridge of Sighs, the dark curtain inscribed with Faliero's doom, recalled the tales of suffering that historians have recorded and poets have intensified. I neglected nothing that untiring industry enabled me to see; the luxurious cushions of my gondola affording me repose and amusement in my transit from place to place.

There was only one theatre then open, and some of my evenings were passed there. The building was neither spacious nor handsome; the performances not of a very high order. One evening there was a translation or, I should rather say, an adaptation of Sheridan's 'School for Scandal,' in which an English playgoer would have found difficulty in recognising the original. In a kind of romantic drama, reminding me in some scenes of the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, and in others of Schiller's 'Robbers,' there was much power. It was tolerably acted and vehemently applauded. The chief actor, a young and well-favoured man, appeared to rely solely on his energy and sensibility for success. He did not appear to have bestowed a thought upon the influence that birth, or age, or country might have produced on the expression of passion. How unlike the probing research of Talma! There was no character; no difference in his several performances beyond the dress he wore; nor did he seem to have made grace in the least degree the object of his study, though surrounded, as the student is here, with so many monitors of its power. With so many models to guide the pupil in his attainment of elegance, the decency of gesture on this stage seemed utterly disregarded. A jerking, confined movement of the actor's arms, a constant ungraceful shifting of the legs, offended the eye of taste; but with all his faults, his want of repose, of grace, and discrimination of

* The news of Canova's death arrived while I was in Venice. I had a letter of introduction to him and hoped to see him in Rome.

character (for he was always the representative of himself), this player from his single earnestness and ardency took a strong hold on the feelings of his auditors. In the excess of rage or agony of grief he would almost shriek, and his voice would reach a degree of shrillness that threatened to endanger his retention of sympathy, but, the moment of peril once successfully passed, the effect produced was powerful and even terrible. The studious artist will "gather honey from the weed," deriving instruction from the imperfections of others, and in this clever actor's performances the lesson impressed was the enforcement of Shakespeare's injunction—"In the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of your passion, to acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness."

The days to which my sojourn here was restricted having rapidly passed away, my departure for Florence could no longer be delayed. My friend Moreau had been faithful to his promise, and my course was shaped in agreement with his instructions. It was dark when I arrived at the palace degraded now to the Office for Diligences, where I was to embark for Chioggia. When I entered the filthy packet that was to convey me from Venice, the moon had not yet risen, but the blue sky was richly spangled with stars, and the frequent lights from the palaces and buildings on the Great Canal gave the scene a most lustrous and imposing effect. These, reflected in the water, and the lamps of the gondolas sometimes gliding slowly along, now darting like shooting-stars across the sight like spirits on the waters, all make this sea-born city a place of enchantment. How very regretfully I saw the vessel pass the magnificent structures that embank the canal! I spread my cloak and pillow on the deck, and lay along, looking alternately from the bright heaven above—where now the moon, "apparent queen," was shining—to the waters, the islands, the banks, and sea-marks we were slowly passing, and with a heavy heart bade a long, a last adieu to Venice, bearing with me recollections of delight that time cannot efface or weaken. At Ferrara, which I reached by packet-boats on the Adige and the Po, my stay was short, enabling me to see no other objects of interest than the prison of Tasso, the tomb, house, and MSS. of Ariosto, and the heavy mass of the Ducal Palace, rendered more gloomy by the remembrance of Lord Byron's 'Parisina.' Thence to Bologna,

where the sculptures of John of Bologna, and the works of the Caracci school, especially the pictures by Domenichino and Guido, would have recompensed weeks of study; but two days were all I had to give to this noble city. The square leaning tower appeared to me a most unsightly object, calculated to excite, perhaps, surprise and wonder in some, but awakening no feeling of pleasure in the true lover of art.

In my progress through the streets of the city, my curiosity was aroused by the sight of a woman very respectably dressed in mourning, with a black thick veil enveloping her person and completely hiding her face, seated on a low slab or stool; her head bowed down implied distress, but the decency of her appearance did not warrant at first view the idea of utter indigence. On inquiring into the cause of her long continuance in the same place and posture, I was told that she was "*una mendicante vergognosa;*" that it was a privilege authorized by long custom for an unfriended woman, overtaken by calamity and under the pressure of poverty, to resort for one day to this mode of exciting the commiseration of the benevolent, concealing her name and person; but that beyond the day she was not entitled to the indulgence. It struck me as a custom that, in its tenderness to misfortune, had something of delicacy in it, affording the sufferer a chance of relief without the humiliation of exposure.

At a day theatre, in which the spectators sat in the open air, an Italian version of Voltaire's 'Zaire' was performed. I arrived only in time to see the last act. The Orasmin was a bulky, drowsy caricature of the impassioned Sultan of Jerusalem, but the Zaire displayed grace and feeling that made me regret the loss of her earlier scenes. It was at Bologna that I saw, for the only time in my life, the "*giuoco del ballone.*" I paid an admission fee to the court; the players were three or four on a side, and certainly astonished me by the extraordinary strength, dexterity, and agility they displayed.

CHAPTER XVI.

1822.—Florence—Fiesole—Sir Robert Comyn—Naples—Eruption of Vesuvius —Pompeii—Pæstum — Herculaneum — William Etty — Rome — Parma— Milan—Pantomimic acting — Turin — Geneva—Paris—Talma in 'Sylla.'

My journey over the Apennines by *vetturino* was made in company of a most repulsive description, and under a degree of temperature that, greatly heightening the disagreeableness of my fellow-passengers, made Florence a haven of delight, as I took possession of airy rooms in my comfortable hotel on the Lung' Arno. Before setting out next morning on my daily tour of observation, I was surprised by the servant's delivery of a small packet with my name inscribed, the bearer waiting for an answer. Who could possibly know me in Florence? was my immediate thought. I was as much amused, as I had been surprised, on opening the packet, which contained a little MS. book, very legibly and carefully written; the first page of which I copy *verbatim:*

"On the auspicious arrival in Florence of most distinct and illustrious noble gentleman, Sir William Macready, England, the accademician and poet, Laurence Vallazani, in testimony of his dutiful respect, presents to your gentleman, with the most sincere desire, his following poetical compositions, with hopes that your gentleman will not disdain to place them under your powerful protection, and flatters himself that, with the usual generosity of your gentleman, will not fail to be rewarded."

This was the introduction of three sonnets in Italian, the first of which, "Pel felice arrivo in Firenze," began thus:

"Almo Signor, questa città di Flora
Lieta e contenta e più dell' usato,
Poiche l' aspetto grave e insiem ben grato,
Di tua gentil presenza oggi l' onora."

Inquiring how much would qualify me as a worthy Mæcenas of

this poet, I purchased my patron's title with a couple of francs, with which the poor fellow was well satisfied. This, as I understood, was his means of livelihood, being presented with the alteration of the name to every new arrival.

The character of this city resembles none that I had previously passed through. Even in presence of the massive structure, with its donjon-like aspect, of the Ducal Palace, or Palazzo Vecchio, frowning over the Piazza which it overshadows, I should say that elegance was its distinguishing peculiarity. Even to the pavement of its streets there is a neatness and a finish rarely observable elsewhere. More than a fortnight was busily employed by me in this delightful depository of high art, storing my mind with images of beauty and interest that are still a lively enjoyment to me. To enumerate them would fill a volume. Nothing was neglected. The churches, particularly the Duomo with its baptistery and the Santa Croce, the galleries, palaces, museums, rich to profusion in the various arts, opened a new world of meditation to me; but the days were too short for the manifold subjects of study and observation that courted my attention, several of which lured me again and again to their inspection. It would be a languid taste that could soon be wearied with the treasures of the Galleria di Firenze, among which "the statue that enchants the world," the Medicean Venus, is the primary attraction. I confess myself, in a certain degree, disappointed in it. The real beauty of "the human face divine" is its expression, and in the face of the Venus there is none, so that no sentiment is awakened beyond the pleasure of admiring its well-adjusted proportions, the accuracy of which, however, I have heard, is disputed by some anatomists. The Venus of Canova at the Pitti Palace is a graceful figure, with a gentle compression of the lips as if suppressing a smile. But of all the statues I have ever seen, the Venus of Milo in the Louvre answers, I think, to the most perfect ideal of womanly loveliness.

I copied the inscriptions on the monument of Macchiavelli, Michael Angelo, Galileo, Alfieri, and others; visited the different places of amusement, the Cascine, Boboli Gardens, and the theatres then open. At the Day Theatre I saw Goldoni's comedy of 'L'Aventuriere Onorato,' which, being

very well acted, amused me very much. With Milton's poetry so frequent in my thought, and the "Anche si muove" of the Tuscan artist he celebrates, I could not omit to visit Fiesole. I drove there one day after dinner, but within half a mile of the town, wishing to spare the horses the toil of the steep ascent, I left the carriage to wait for me in the road, and briskly made my way up to the convent, that, above Fiesole, caps the very summit of the hill. Attended by one of the friars, I went over the wretched garden, through the dormitory, into the refectory, where the supper of the monks, a slice of bread and bunch of dried grapes for each, was laid out; and, after listening to the monk's complaints of the convent's poverty, I left a gratuity for the few brethren there and rushed down the narrow road that led me back to the town. It was then twilight, and, seeing the cathedral doors open before me, I did not slacken my speed, but bounded in and with rapid steps had reached the middle of the nave before two persons at the high altar were aware of my intrusion. One was a priest who, in desecration of the place and forgetfulness of his holy office, was in the act of kissing a young woman. Startled by my sudden irruption, he hastily retreated into the sacristy at the left hand, and the young girl flung herself upon her knees against a bench at the right, with her head so bent down, that, as I walked round the church and passed close by her, I could not get a glimpse of her features. When I had nearly regained the door, the priest returned: whether to resume his devotional exercise or no, I did not stay to inquire. It was a *festa* in the town, which was crowded with people. Descending the hill, I soon reached the carriage, and at Florence mentioned the strange scene I had witnessed. I was told that I ought to make the bishop acquainted with the circumstance, but knowing how light ecclesiastical penances generally are, I did not think it worth while to move further in the matter.

At the hotel where I lodged, I had the good fortune to meet Comyn, with whom I had made acquaintance at Talfourd's chambers. We were on the same route, and, as he preceded me two or three days, we agreed to meet again at Naples. Our intimacy ripened into friendship, continued through many years. He went out as Sir Robert Comyn to a

judgeship in India, and, after holding the office of Chief Justice of Madras for a considerable period, returned to England with a very good fortune. The day of my departure having arrived, I left this delightful city with the courier; and as he had charge of the mail, my journey precluded all attempts at delay, so that the interesting tract over which we passed was almost a dead letter to me. Of Siena I saw nothing beyond the great square and the exterior of the cathedral, and had only a passing glance at the Lake of Bolsena. The summer heats were not yet sufficiently tempered to make Rome a safe sojourn, and I therefore took advantage of the courier's early start to limit my stay there to a very few hours. We could gain but partial views of the country from our carriage windows, so that beyond the "impositum saxis late candentibus Anxur," * the modern Terracina, the conviction that we were on the track of the Via Appia, and the sight of the identical pavement at Fondi that once made part of it, we had little to remind us of Horace's journey to Brundusium, which nevertheless was frequently in my thoughts. We had been cautioned to avoid sleep as much as possible, particularly over the Pontine Marshes; and, as a defence against the malaria, had frequent recourse to some strong aromatic vinegar that I had procured at Florence. The mere sight of the unfortunate creatures who, in the service of the posts there, brought out the relays of horses, was sufficient to create uneasy sensations in breathing this pestilential atmosphere. Their complexion was the deepest yellow, their limbs like those of actual skeletons, whilst the swollen dropsical stomach was protruded out of all proportion with the rest of their emaciated frame. It was a dismal spectacle, bespeaking a speedy termination to a life of miserable endurance, exciting at once pity and disgust, from which it was a relief to escape.

Arrived at Naples and luxuriously lodged in a very good hotel on the Chiatamone, commanding a full view of the Bay, that in its beauty even surpassed my highly wrought expectations, no time was lost in making out my plans. A fresh field of exploration opened before me, and with all the ardour of a discoverer of new regions, I entered on my pursuit, taking

* "Anxur, built on its far-gleaming cliffs."— *Horace*, Sat. i. 5. 26.— ED. TRANS.

in due turn the churches, palaces, and repositories of works of special interest, at the head of which, for unrivalled excellence, abundance and variety of objects, stood the Museo Borbonico, rich in the antiquities amassed from Herculaneum, Pompeii, &c., and in the marvellous creations of genius from the earliest classic times down to the glories of mediæval art. My hours of business (for my daily rounds, though a labour of love, were treated as business by me) were agreeably diversified by the acquaintances I formed here. Our Minister to the Court of Naples, Mr. Hamilton, was most kind in his attentions to me; no less so was Lord Kinnaird. Mathias, a distant connection of ours, the well-known author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' described in Canning's verse as—

> "Thou, the nameless bard, whose honest zeal
> For Law, for Morals, for the Public Weal,
> Pours down impetuous on thy country's foes
> The stream of verse and many-languaged prose,"—

was on a visit to Mr. Otway Cave, and introduced me to the hospitalities of that charming family. It was at dinner with Lord Kinnaird, that I heard the startling news of the suicide of Lord Londonderry. As a minister he was unpopular, and would have been more in his proper element, I fancy, in the command of an army than at the head of a cabinet or as leader of the House of Commons. He was possessed of very considerable talent, of a very gentlemanly address, and such undaunted courage that he might have been classed among the bravest of the brave.

From this dinner-party it was that I started in a carriage for Resina, where I engaged a guide for the ascent of Vesuvius. The wells at Resina, Portici, &c., had been for some days dried up, and the usual indications of an eruption near at hand were noticed with anxiety by the inhabitants. Every three or four minutes volleys of red-hot ashes and stones with clouds of white smoke from the crater were shot far up into the air. There could not have been a better time for a visit to the volcano. A sure-footed donkey carried me through narrow lanes and vineyards over the ragged track of the mountain path, and we reached our resting-place a little before midnight. It was a region of desolation, a desert of ashes, and huge blocks of lava; a wilderness of

nature's ruin without one speck of vegetation. There was a sort of *hospice*, or "hermitage" as it was called,—why, I do not know, except that two jolly fellows in monks' frocks receive visitors here and get well paid for their ministry of sour wine and tepid water, which they call "*acqua fresca.*" I was shown into an upper room furnished with a bed, on which I did not venture to lie down. The open window gave a soft balmy air delightful to the sense, and a view of the sea, the surrounding hills, and the city, all spread out underneath in the bright moonlight. The stillness was so profound as to be really felt, and was rendered more impressive by the low and hollow murmur, from time to time, of voices in the chamber beneath; and sometimes more solemnly by the roaring of the mountain above, "whose grisly top belched fire and rolling smoke." I never had the sense of solitude as on that night and in that room; and in that loneliness, my thoughts, strangely enough, wandered to my home and those I loved in my own dear country.

After a time I fell into a doze, from which a horrible dream awoke me in a cold perspiration. Two hours after midnight, my guide knocked at my door with the announcement, "All ready." I remounted my donkey, the guide walking beside me, and another man leading the way with a torch, over and between blocks of lava of all sizes. Nothing but lava and ashes—the scene so dismal, as to call up Thomson's line, "Horror wide extends his desolate domain." At a certain point we stopped to light our torches, the moon being now so low in the heavens as to cast deep shadows over our rugged path, and, leaving the donkey to the care of our assistant, we continued our uneven and stumbling course until we came to the foot of the cone. Here I gave up my torch as a useless encumbrance, and rushed up the ascent (which seemed almost perpendicular) of loose ashes, that gave way in every step I made. When about two-thirds of the way up, I stopped to rest myself, and looking down the "vast abrupt," for such it seemed, I felt my head turn dizzy with the height. I thought I must give up the task; but not liking to be beaten, I set to again. Again I faltered, and again pushed on, and, at last reaching the margin of the crater, I rolled along upon the ground in a state of most

profuse perspiration, and desired my guide to wrap my cloak over me that I might recover breath and strength. The position and form of the craters have of late years, as I have read, been by sundry eruptions entirely altered; but at this time there were two, the one to which we attained in active discharge, the other, of far more extensive circumference, extinct, and exhibiting here and there some scanty verdure in parts of it.

After a little rest, which was most grateful to me, we made our approaches to the mouth of the yawning gulf, and went so near the edge of the crater that, as the red-hot ashes came tumbling close about us, my guide objected to remaining, and we took up a position a little more distant. The moon went down blood-red below the horizon on one side, and we waited to see the sun rise up "in glory and in joy" upon the other. My attention was arrested by a most extraordinary sound, to which I stood listening for some time. It was like a deep and heavy sigh, that every now and then breathed out from the depths of the volcano, as of the mountain panting from exhaustion.* Inquiring of the guide what this might be, he informed me that it was a sound that was heard every morning at sunrise, when the mountain was in a state of agitation. It was with a feeling akin to awe that I lingered to catch each return of this mysterious sound, that impressed me as the stifled expression of pain from some gigantic prodigy of nature. My summer in England might have been turned to good account in a pecuniary point of view, but the memory of a spectacle of true sublimity like this was a treasure of thought not to be computed by coin. I felt grateful for the indulgence of my wishes, and prepared for my descent with extreme reluctance. But, *facilis descensus! Facilis*, indeed; for we had only to give our heels to the loose surface of our downward way, and in two or three minutes, laughing all the time, we were at the foot of the cone. Leaving the customary compliment with mine hosts of the hermitage, and parting on good terms with my donkey and Salvatore, my guide, at Resina, I soon made my way from thence in a carriage back to Chiatamone.

My evenings not spent in society or in the theatres were usually passed in a lonely row on the Bay, where, letting the boatman go at will, I could observe the frequent outburst

of Vesuvius, or watch the deepening shadows on the surrounding shores of Pausilippo and Sorrento, and the distant isles of Capri, Procida, and Ischia. At the San Carlo, that gorgeous theatre, I saw a mythological ballet, not very well performed; the 'Cenerentola' at the Fondo, and at the Teatro Nuovo a literal translation of Murphy's comedy of the 'Way to Keep Him,' in which Lovemore was addressed and spoken of as Mis-ter Lovy-more. The actress who personated the widow Belmour was the same accomplished artiste whom I had seen at Bologna in Zaire. She was the very ideal of the woman of fashion, gay, graceful, and altogether charming.

My tour to Pæstum by way of Pompeii was made in company with Comyn. In walking through the streets of Pompeii, the once buried city, examining the amphitheatre, almost perfect, the Forum, theatres, and private dwellings, in marking the ruts worn by carriages in the stony pavement, imagination wanted little aid in building up the Roman town as it stood, and peopling it with the busy throngs that ages since gave life to it. Pompeii presents a history of the Roman's social state that no verbal description can equal, and is to the antiquary and artist an inexhaustible treasury of instruction. On our onward route we were several times accompanied by Neapolitan beggars, running for more than a mile by the side of the carriage, and pleading in significant dumb show their necessities. It is not an unusual custom for Italians to answer your questions by a gesture, if limited to "yes" or "no;" but the Neapolitan has a silent language and is eloquent in his gesticulation. Assuming a most rueful aspect, the pantomime of his limber hands, alternately waving in a most dejected manner, pointing to his open mouth, and tapping his craving stomach, distinctly indicative of his wants, needed no interpreter. But translated into English words it would run: "Illustrious Signor, I am a very miserable creature; this poor stomach is quite empty; put something into my open mouth to send into it; and Heaven will reward you!" With this mute but expressive action, irresistible in provoking one's laughter, the persevering suitor seldom fails to extort some *bajocchi* from one's charity.

We slept at Vietri, and with the early morning drove on to Pæstum. The country through which we passed appeared utterly

deserted, as if depopulated by malaria. The three magnificent temples, so grand and majestic in their solitary state, were well worth a longer journey. I was never before so impressed, whatever the criticisms of architects may advance, with the beauty of fitness and just proportion, as in the sight of these noble monuments of a bygone civilization. On our way home we reached Portici about noon, and were invited by the loiterers, who surrounded our carriage, to see what was shown of Herculaneum. Unaware or not remembering that, having been submerged by floods of lava, all that can be seen of it is excavated from the subterranean rock, we followed our guide, and down a flight of steps descended by candle-light to the vaulted passages cut out of the ancient theatre. The walls, which a little scraping showed to be marble, were streaming with moisture; and having on me no heavier garment than a light cambric muslin jacket, the chill seemed to strike right through me. Being able to see nothing beyond the bits of wall that the candle showed, I was anxious to return, but Comyn, whom a *coup d'œil* generally satisfied, persisted most provokingly in lingering in this well-like cavern. I afterwards learned that Herculaneum was the best friend to the Neapolitan physicians.

Returning to Naples, we dined together at a *trattoria* over the bay, amused with the vociferous oratory of the vendors of maccaroni and water-melons, who kept up an incessant jabber in extolling the excellence of their respective objects of merchandise. Parting for the night, he went to a theatre, and I enjoyed the beauty of the evening, watching the violent explosions of Vesuvius on the smooth waters of the bay till nearly midnight. But the next morning I awoke in great pain and seriously indisposed. Calling in the course of the day on Lord Kinnaird, he perceived that I was very ill, and gave me the address of Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Clark, enjoining me to send for him without delay, which of course I did. I was laid up for many days with a bilious fever, and, under God, owe my life, I believe, to my physician's skilful treatment of my disorder. The loss of time and strength this illness cost me, obliged me to give up several objects of interest I had reckoned on seeing, and I was obliged to use a carriage during the few remaining days left me in Naples. The tomb

of Virgil I could not leave unnoticed, and from it continued my drive through the grotto of Pausilippo. Under my windows I had the baleful sight of the Austrian force (then in occupation of the city, ten thousand strong) passing in procession to the Chapel of the Virgin, on occasion of the *Festa della sua Natività*. Every man's uniform was padded, and some made a most grotesque appearance: the paddings, intended to give a stalwart appearance by the prominence of the chest, in many cases went down to the lower stomach. I could not help thinking that half the number of Englishmen would have sent those fellows to the right-about in double quick time. There was a small park of artillery in the Toledo, and Austrian uniforms in every street exposed the humiliated condition of the government. I felt as if I could not recover my strength here, and had a horror of being buried, should I die, in Naples.

The day of our departure was fixed, and places taken to Rome with the courier for Comyn and myself. The third seat was occupied by a short thin young man with very light hair, his face marked with the small-pox, very gentle in his manner, with a shrill and feeble tone of voice, whom we found a very accommodating and agreeable travelling companion, and whom through all his after-life I found a very warm friend. It was William Etty, whose picture of Cleopatra on the Cydnus had already given earnest of the elevation he subsequently obtained. Without any particular adventure we reached Rome, whither my thoughts had wandered long before. How large a space in the early dreams of our imagination is filled with the events of its stirring history!—and here I was, in all the fervour of youthful enthusiasm, on the very stage where those events were acted! This high delight I had reserved as the climax of my holiday's enjoyment. In the map of travel that I had marked out myself, here was "the butt, the very sea-mark of my utmost sail." I took a very snug lodging in the Piazza di Spagna. Though now much at ease, with tolerable fluency, in Italian, I still continued, as in all my other resting-places, the services of a tutor. My Roman aid was a literary man recommended to me by Mathias, whom I engaged to talk with me an hour every day.

I should fill a volume in giving a catalogue of the scenes and works of art that crowd upon the attention here. It is

enough to say that with redoubled ardour I set myself to improve the opportunities before me.* I was up every morning with the first gleam of light to wander over the Forum and its precincts, through the Coliseum, the baths, the circuses, temples, and sites consecrated to memory by poets and historians. Nothing was left unobserved or unstudied that came within my reach, from the interior of the brass ball on the dome of St. Peter's, through a crack of which I had a sight of

> "Latium's wide domain, forlorn and waste,
> Where yellow Tiber his neglected wave
> Mournfully rolls,"

to the secluded fountain of Egeria. The statues, from that of Pompey, at whose base "great Cæsar fell," to that mutilated mass which goes by the name of Pasquin (but which is, I believe, the remnant of a group either of Hæmon and Antigone, or Menelaus and Patroclus), were scanned again and again with unsatiated interest; but the two that took the firmest hold of my attention and admiration were the Apollo in his majesty of superhuman beauty, and the Gladiator in his heroic sufferance of the death that was overshadowing him. With the masterpieces of the sister art I was not less familiar, being a frequent attendant at the Vatican and the many galleries enriched with the works of Raphael, Guido, Michael Angelo, Domenichino, the Caraccis and others, feasting my sight with the beauty they have bequeathed us, and taking lessons in grace and expression from the forms and combinations they have so wonderfully delineated.

Among the portraits were two that, from their evident verisimilitude and the tragic histories attaching to them, left a deep and painful impression on me. These were the Cæsar Borgia in the Borghese Palace by Raphael, and the Beatrice Cenci in the Barberini Palace by Guido. The first, with his hand upon his dagger's hilt, in his handsome swarthy

* Macready's copy of Vasi's 'Itinerario di Roma' (edition of 1820) is now in the Editor's possession. It contains abundant proof of the diligence with which he went over Rome. It is full of notes and observations in Italian, carefully written in ink upon the margins of the pages, and contains his remarks on pictures, mentioning many which are not named in the guide-book.—Ed.

Italian countenance reveals a capacity for mischief that has rendered his name supremely infamous, whilst the mild innocence of the features of the lovely Beatrice seems irreconcilable with the perpetration of the crime for which she suffered, and the intrepidity with which she confronted her accusers. I seemed here to be walking in a day-dream of delight, recalling the deeds of other times, standing on the very spot where Cicero might have fulminated his sentence of expulsion against Catiline, and where Virginius might have made his awful sacrifice. Visions of the past rose incessantly before me. The faces of the antique busts and statues became so familiar to me that Comyn used to say, "There was no necessity with me for a catalogue." We dined at the same *trattoria*, meeting almost every day at dinner, where he generally saluted me with the intimation of the number of galleries he had "knocked off" in the morning. Our excursions to Tivoli, Adrian's Villa and Horace's Farm, and to Albano and Tusculum, were made with Mr. Pemberton Leigh (afterwards Lord Kingsdown). The pictures of these places were photographed on my memory in life-enduring colours, of which words could make no copy.

It would not be expected that, in Rome, the effect of the Catholic religion on the popular mind should escape my notice. Outward observance would be judged by many to be all in all to its possessors. I have watched those who came to pray at St. Peter's, leaving the shrines before which they had been kneeling, approach the bronze figure of the Prince of the Apostles (said to have been originally a statue of Jupiter), and wiping its foot with their cuffs bestow their devotional kisses upon it. The metal is considerably worn by these pious tributes; and in the church of Sta. Maria della Minerva is a marble statue of the Saviour by Michael Angelo, the foot of which, for its protection and further preservation, has been encased in a sandal of brass, so much of it having been worn away by the pilgrims' kisses. The more respectful and serious demeanour of the English and Irish novices is particularly noticeable in contrast with the levity and air of indifference with which the Italians go through their Aves and Paternosters. Italians will sometimes stare with astonishment at their enrapt earnestness, and observe to one another, "E un Inglese." One evening, at the theatre of

the Marionettes, in the course of the performance a tinkling bell was heard in the street; the curtain was instantly lowered, and all present in devout silence went down immediately upon their knees. In surprise, I inquired of my neighbour what that might be. I did not directly understand her whispered answer, "E il Signor!"—which she explained to me as the Host which the priests were carrying to some dying or sick person. These ceremonial offices did not tend to strengthen my faith in the depth of religious feeling in Italy.

My days, that had been so industriously and happily employed, were now drawing to a close. My leave of absence would soon expire, and my return to England could no longer be delayed. With what reluctance I prepared for my departure, the following extract from my journal will explain:—

"*October 17th*, 1822.—In a few hours I shall leave Rome. The heaviness and despondency I feel are not, I trust, a presage of ill to come, but there is a weight on my spirits I strive in vain to shake off. It is like a foreboding that, in the balance of life's good and ill, the future will have much to set off against the enjoyment of the past. I have been able here to free myself from all the cares and annoyances which will in degree chequer the most fortunate conditions, and have allowed my time to glide away—how swiftly it has passed!—in pleasing speculations and delicious reveries on things and names gone by. I am recalled to the duties and serious realities of the world, and must henceforth make reputation and interest the objects of my eager aim. This morning I revisited for a last farewell the various places which have been familiarized to me by my frequent rambles and meditations. From the Pantheon, where I ruminated over the ashes of Raphael and Annibal Caracci—from Michael Angelo's grand and pensive statue of the Saviour in the church of Sta. Maria, I proceeded to the Capitol to copy the inscription on the urn of Agrippina. I descended to the Forum, taking my last view between the Senate House and the Tarpeian, and made the circuit of the Palatine; entered once more the Coliseum, and lingered among its imperial ruins till compelled to leave them. It was with regret amounting almost to pain, that I took leave of these incentives to high thought. But to have been in Rome is something—a possession among memory's treasures for which the ordinary pleasures of life have

no equivalent. I cannot moreover forget the prison of Tasso, the birthplace of Livy, and the grave of Virgil where my homage has been paid. I have sailed on the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, and the single consciousness of where I then was has been a reflection of self-gratulation to me. I have thought, as I walked through the silent and deserted ruins of the Queen of Cities, the once 'mistress of the world, the seat of empire, the delight of gods,' that the mighty spirits who raised her to her pinnacle of unequalled glory had walked and mused upon the very spot where I then trod. This is some consolation that these gratifications have been and will be mine while life lasts:

> 'Not fate itself upon the past has power,
> But what has been has been, and I have had my hour.'"

My plan of return was unavoidably altered. I had calculated on presenting my letter of introduction to Lord Byron at Pisa, and making a short stay there on my way to Genoa; but on account of some injury to the road, which would require time for repairing, the passage was closed, and I was forced to retread my steps by way of Bologna. This was a grievous disappointment, as I had counted much on seeing the noble poet in whose works I was so deeply read. An English physician, Dr. Crawford, whom I met at Florence, was on his way to England, and, joining company, we took our homeward course in a *scappa-via* from Bologna through Modena and Reggio to Parma, where we rested, and profited by the opportunity of seeing the beautiful easel-pictures and frescoes of Correggio, and the wooden theatre, said to be the largest in Europe, and which certainly is the most remarkable for its wonderful transmission of sound. From Parma to Piacenza, where the Po is crossed by a bridge of boats, our next resting-place was Lodi, made famous by the desperate passage of the bridge over the Adda, one of the most daring exploits in military history, performed by Napoleon Buonaparte and Massena at the head of their grenadiers in face of the Austrian army.

We reached Milan the same night in time to be present at the performance of a grand serious ballet at the Scala, where a pantomimist, called Pellerina, famous throughout

Italy, acted the principal character. The story has been dramatised with some alterations by Hannah More in her tragedy of 'Percy,' and was probably suggested by Boccaccio's tale of Gismunda and Guiscardo. The heroine has been compelled to marry a nobleman during the absence of her lover in the Holy Land, who on his return falls a victim to the infuriate jealousy of the husband, and not satisfied with this revenge, the implacable husband, to glut his hatred, sends from the field of combat her lover's heart to her enclosed in a golden case. The grace, intelligence, and emotion expressed in her attitudes and gestures riveted attention throughout; but the effect of her acting in the scene where she receives the mysterious present, was beyond what I have ever seen produced by similar means. With a foreboding of its contents, most distinctly expressed, she hesitated in opening the casket, and her look and stiffened attitude of horror when the appalling truth was disclosed was actually thrilling! I covered my face with my hands, so much was I affected by the tragic power of this extraordinary artiste. Unless I had witnessed the performance, I could not have believed that mere mute expression, without the aid of language, could have worked so powerfully on the feelings. The next morning Dr. Crawford invited me to accompany him to the Ospedale Maggiore, to the Curator of which he had a letter. It was a truly noble establishment; the cleanliness and quietude were remarkable. We walked through the extensive and well-ventilated wards of the male patients, where the beds were ranged at convenient distances on either side; not a word was spoken, nor a sound beyond that of our own footsteps heard to disturb the stillness. From there we crossed the courtyard to the women's ward. There is to me no sound in nature more sweet than that of woman's voice, and impressed with that belief I shall not be thought reflecting on the sex when, adopting Shakespeare's dictum, "the sweetest honey is loathsome in its own deliciousness," I could wish for moderation even in what might be most charming. On opening the door the clatter that burst upon our ears from the double row of invalid beds made such a Babel, that we were glad to shut it and escape from the din that might be called a chorus, but which certainly was not a "harmony of tongues."

On to Turin, where I had time to go through the royal

gallery, in which are many fine pictures; among them the Vandyke portraits of the Stuart family particularly engaged my notice. The triple portrait of Charles I., sent to Italy for Bernini to model a statue from, showed the unintellectual character of the face as I had never before remarked it. In the courier's mail-carriage, a very comfortable sort of conveyance, my journey was continued over Mont Cenis in a violent snow-storm, by no means an agreeable transit to Chambery. Les Charmettes, the residence of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Warens, I visited, but entertaining no sympathy with the occupants that have made the place an object of public curiosity. The profound thought, the eloquence and descriptive power of Rousseau, cannot reconcile me to his disregard of the first social obligations; but whilst I read with disgust his violation of them, and his repudiation of nature's claims, Pity lifts "her soul-subduing voice" in the doubt that arises of his perfect sanity. He has left great utterances, and taught in words the wisdom he could not prove and illustrate by practice. Arriving at Geneva, I went to Ferney. The house of Voltaire, and his bed-room, said to be left exactly as in his lifetime, with the portrait of Le Kain opposite to his bed, could not fail to give matter for much reflection. If all he wrote had been written in the spirit of his romance of 'Zadig,' what a benefactor to mankind his mighty genius would have made him! The diligence took me to Dijon, where I slept, and the next morning went at the earliest business hour to the bankers to change my last *billet de banque*. On my way back I turned into a very handsome *café*, and ordered breakfast. At a table on the opposite side of the room was a gentleman whose features I instantly recognised.

How often one may hear from Englishmen indiscriminate abuse of the French character! In conversation once with Savage Landor, I remember making some observation on the very general diffusion of taste in France, when I was interrupted by the grand old poet with, "Sir, the French are all scoundrels!" It was with difficulty I restrained myself from laughing out at this brusque universality of condemnation; but I regret to think that many Englishmen totally unacquainted with France and Frenchmen would be found readily

disposed to endorse the libel. I can remember when the House of Commons would hear with the silence of indifference, if not of acquiescence, the monstrous dogma which the bigot ignorance of members has laid down, that the French and English were natural enemies: an implied arrangement of the Creator, whose attribute is love, at once as impious as it is absurd. Englishmen in visiting France too often neglect the needful study of the language, and in consequence expose themselves to embarrassment and inconvenience, which they resent in their vituperation of a people whose style and address are usually allowed to be most courteous and conciliatory. My own experience of them would justify me in maintaining politeness to be a national characteristic. Nor is kindness of heart a quality less native to them than urbanity of manner: an interesting proof of this was afforded me on the present occasion. The gentleman whom I had noticed, after a few minutes, casting his eyes to my side of the room, started up, and exclaiming "Oh! Monsieur Macready!" rushed over to me and embraced me with the most genuine cordiality. It was Monsieur Guillaume, one of my young French *compagnons de voyage*, whom I had parted with at Milan in the early summer. He sat at my table while I breakfasted, and not all the resistance and remonstrance I could make availed to prevent him from discharging my account. He insisted that I should be "his guest" whilst in Dijon. His family were still in the country, but he took me to his house, an extremely handsome one, left in the care of a servant, accompanied me to the Museum, entertained me at the principal *restaurant* with a *recherché* dinner, and walked or sat with me to the hour of my departure, nine at night, when he shook hands with me as I took my seat in the diligence for Paris. I had given him my address in London, where he promised to see me, and where I had hoped to renew our intimacy; but it was not fated that we should ever meet again. This unexpected *rencontre* is a very pleasing remembrance, and it is a small return in recording this, among many instances of spontaneous friendliness; to bear testimony to the kindly spirit and amiability of disposition in Frenchmen, of which I have had such large experience.

Arrived at Paris, I took up my quarters at my old hotel,

Rue Ste. Hyacinthe, and at the *table d'hôte* fell into conversation with an Englishman just come from London, who, in giving me news of the theatres, amused me with what I conceived his blundering statement of having seen Young in Hamlet at Drury Lane. I begged leave to correct him, assuring him it was not possible, and that he must mean Covent Garden. He, however, persisted, and I resolutely in my own mind persuaded myself he was mistaken. There had been for many years an understanding, if not a direct covenant, between the managers, that no performer leaving one theatre should be engaged at the other until after the expiration of a year. The knowledge of this (unjust) compact gave me confidence in my assertion.

'Sylla' was the play at the Théâtre Français, where, of course, I hastened to obtain the best place for seeing the great French actor. The play itself is meagre in incident, deficient in pathos, prosaic in its language, and, indeed, restricted in its apparent aims to the single purpose of developing the character of Sylla. In the success of this attempt the author, Jouy, has been greatly aided by the genius of Talma, the reality of whose impersonation justly entitled him to the grateful acknowledgments of the poet's preface: "Il n'est point acteur: il ne porte ni la pourpre ni le diadême de théâtre: il vit chaque jour pendant deux heures de la vie du personnage qu'il représente. Jamais transformation ne fut plus complète." Having intently watched him throughout his performance, I can readily subscribe to this eulogism. His entry on the stage, in the dignified ease of his deportment, bespoke a consciousness of power that arrested at once the attention and interest of the beholder. In his attitudes and manners there was nothing of the rigidity and visible preparation of Kemble; his address was that of one, to whom the tone of command was too familiar to need strain or effort. His pride, too lofty to be betrayed into violence, displayed itself in his calm disdain of the "Romains dégénérés." To the dependent kings, the mutinous people, or the infuriated Valerie, he preserved the same unperturbed demeanour. The heroic bearing with which he tendered his sword to the conspirator, Claudius, was in the same lofty scorn of death, the same confidence in his destiny. It was only when arraigned at the bar of his own

conscience that he appeared to feel, and confessed the insufficiency of greatness to give peace. In the disturbed sleep, haunted by the vision of his slaughtered victims, which followed his soliloquy, he awed the audience into a death-like stillness. The crowning act of his public life, his abdication, was in accordant tone with the haughty indifference to his servile countrymen that had marked his career of greatness; and his dignified utterance of the line,

"J'ai gouverné sans peur, et j'abdique sans crainte!"

was a fitting climax to the character so nobly and consistently maintained. The toga sat upon him as if it had been his daily costume. His coiffure might have been taken from an antique bust; but was in strict resemblance of Napoleon's. It was reported that several passages had been struck out of the text by the censor, under the apprehension of their application by the Parisians to the exiled emperor, and an order was said to have been sent from the police forbidding Talma to cross his hands behind him, the ordinary habit of Napoleon. Such were the *on dits* of the day; but they detracted nothing from the consummate skill, displayed by this great actor in his personation of the Roman Dictator. It was the perfection of the art, raising it to an intellectual level with the sculptor's or painter's conceptions, and for current value wanting only a medium more tenacious than memory, whereon to stamp the fidelity of its portraiture.

CHAPTER XVII.

1822–1823.—Commencement of Covent Garden season—Sheil's 'Huguenot'—Wolsey in 'Henry VIII.'—'King John'—Miss Mitford's 'Julian'—Shylock—Secession from Covent Garden—Engagement to marry—Agrees with Elliston to act at Drury Lane—Provincial engagements—Rapid journey from Southampton to Montrose—The story of the child rescued from the fire—'Virginius' at Kendal—Tour in the English Lake country—Visit to Wordsworth at Rydal Mount—York—Musical festival—First season at Drury Lane—Meeting of future wife and sister.

My engagements not allowing me to prolong my stay in Paris, I arranged for my departure the next day; but first went to a reading-room in the Rue de la Paix to learn what had been doing in the London theatres during my absence. To my astonishment, indeed it was with dismay, I read in the *Courier* that Emery was dead, and that Young, Miss Stephens, and Liston, had seceded from Covent Garden and were engaged by Elliston at Drury Lane, where crowded houses were in nightly contrast with the deserted benches of the other theatre. But there my lot was cast, and to join this impoverished company, stripped of so many of its ablest supporters and sunk in public opinion, I was under bond to go. It was with a feeling of extreme dejection, indeed of hopelessness, that I set out on my journey. My anticipations fell short of the actual state in which I found the theatre on my arrival. The incapacity of the Covent Garden Committee, in contrast with the policy of Mr. Harris and the enterprise and tact of Elliston, had irrecoverably developed itself. For an inconsiderable weekly sum, they, the committee, had parted with three of their most popular performers, and enabled the rival house to array against their weakened forces a company

comprising the names of Kean, Young, Munden, Liston, Dowton, Elliston, Terry, Harley, Knight, Miss Stephens, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Orger, Mrs. Davison, &c., &c. The result was what could only be expected. Drury Lane was the fashion, and Covent Garden was literally a desert. A few months' experience was sufficient to convince the committee of their inaptitude for the task they had undertaken, and of the fallacy of Charles Kemble's representations and advice. They accordingly wished Mr. Harris to resume the conduct of the theatre, which he declined on the reasonable plea that they had broken up his powerful company; and holding them to their written undertaking to sign the lease agreed upon, a suit in Chancery was the consequence, which terminated in the bankruptcy of the concern. In the meantime, my engagement held me fast, and my first appearance for the season, with very indifferent support, was made, November 13th, 1822, in 'Othello' which, with the combination of Young and Kean, was acting to a run of overflowing houses at Drury Lane. At this time my eldest sister was induced by my pressing representations to take up her abode with me. I had made the same proposal to my younger sister, but incompatibility of temper, which did not prevent us from remaining friends, was a barrier to such a permanent arrangement.

The anxiety of Sheil to bring forward his tragedy of 'The Huguenot' led him to hope that in some rising actress he might find a successor to Miss O'Neill, who could sustain the heroine's part in his play; and with this view he had requested me to give what instruction I could to Miss F. H. Kelly. In consequence I had tutored her in the part of Juliet, which character she successfully repeated several nights to good houses at Covent Garden. But of acting may be said what Scott has said of poetry, it is "the art unteachable, untaught." Her subsequent efforts did not keep pace with the *éclat* of her *début*. 'The Huguenot' was produced with a very feeble cast, and though the part of Polignac was among my most powerful personations, the play sank for want of due support. Abbott was not perfect in the words he had to speak. A character intended for Young was assigned to Bartley, a comic actor, and Yates, in his appearance as the chivalric rival of Polignac, excited a roar of laughter from his resemblance to the Jew, little Isaac Mendoza.

This was the best of Sheil's dramatic works, and deserved a better fate.

The production of 'King Henry VIII.' (January 15th, 1823) gave me the opportunity of studying Cardinal Wolsey, at which I laboured with unremitting diligence, and which has remained among my most favourite Shakespearian assumptions. 'King John' was the next play of Shakespeare's that added another character to my list. Kemble's reputation in this part had reference chiefly, if not exclusively, to the grand scene of John's temptation of Hubert. On this I bestowed, of course, my utmost pains, but brought also into strong relief that in which the coward monarch endeavours to shift his own criminality on Hubert, a scene to which Kemble, in his impressive representation of the part, had neglected to give prominence. It was in this play that Charles Kemble appeared to very great advantage. His handsome person answered to the heroic idea of Faulconbridge, and his performance of the character was most masterly.

A tragedy by Miss Mitford, entitled 'Julian,' acted March 15th, had but moderate success: the Covent Garden company was no longer equal to the support of plays containing several characters. The authoress, in her dedication of her play to me, was profuse in her acknowledgments and compliments, but the performance made little impression and was soon forgotten.

The only remaining event of interest to me was my first essay in the part of Shylock, which I acted with the playful *petite* comedy of 'Matrimony' for my benefit to a crowded house on May 13th, 1823. The audience, ever disposed to look with favour on my attempts, were most liberal in their applause, but I was not satisfied with the execution of my conception, which the study of after years very greatly improved.

The season had been to me one of perplexity, disquiet, and irritation, much of which, as I now perceive, was attributable to the excitability of my own undisciplined temperament. Had I possessed the impassive prudence of Young, the endeavour of the committee to impose on me a contract different from my rightful one would have been quickly and quietly foiled, but my own impatience of wrong lent them arms against me, and whilst striving against manifest injustice, I was, through their

representations, regarded by many as unreasonably captious and causelessly discontented. It was my acceptance of Mr. Harris's verbal pledge in connection with our written agreement that led to disputes, which ended in the rupture of my engagement. I would willingly pass over all notice of the transaction, but my secession from Covent Garden being a part, and an important one, of my professional history, requires to be accounted for. By evasion in the first instance, and by subsequent misstatements, the committee sought to nullify the verbal part of my agreement, acknowledged in writing by Mr. Harris and attested by Mr. Reynolds.

After much correspondence and studied delay on the part of the committee, I at length yielded most injudiciously to the proposal to submit the question to arbitration, with the emphatic proviso that the settlement should be made immediately. Talfourd and Maule (both of whom subsequently attained seats on the Bench) were nominated arbiters on the above condition. Maule, the committee's referee, deferred the settlement of the business, and the season closed without any meeting having taken place. In consequence I instructed Talfourd to signify to the committee my withdrawal of his authority to act in the matter, and by the same post gave them notice that, as they demurred to ratify my engagement, I held it to be void, and should act on that understanding.

It was with regret I left Covent Garden, the scene of my earlier successes, and associated with so much of interest in my professional career; but under the present management it was no longer the same theatre. I may perhaps be suspected of exhibiting an unnecessary, or at least a premature, querulousness on what may seem only a possible contingency; but, involving as my engagement did not only a question of pecuniary amount, but also that of my rank in the theatre, it was of especial importance that its terms should be recognised and distinctly specified. The circumstance arising from this imbroglio that I must lament, was the rupture of those friendly relations which had so long subsisted between Mr. Fawcett and myself. It is only due to his memory to admit what I have since seen, that, through my inexperience and impatience of the committee's injustice, I gave too little consideration to the difficulty of his position between

the parties; and it is with grateful respect to his memory that I now give utterance to my regret, recalling the many acts of kindness I had received from him. I wrote to him after my illness, but my letter did not, I have reason to believe, convey to him the full expression of my feelings as I could have wished.

The impolicy, to use no harsher term, of the committee's conduct will be apparent from its results. In acceding to the payment demanded, and in previous seasons received, by Young, Miss Stephens, and Liston, the total addition to the weekly charge on the Covent Garden Treasury, including the consequent advance of £5 per week to myself, would have been only £20, for which consideration the committee lost the services of those most popular performers, who profited by this unthrifty economy in the receipt each of £20 per night, which Elliston readily gave them. Although eventually benefited in a pecuniary point of view, much mischief arose to me from the cabal to which I was afterwards exposed from the partizans of the Covent Garden management. But it is a dreary wilderness where some flowers do not grow, and in the midst of all this turmoil and contention, sweet and soothing promises of happier days would often intervene, and, under present vexations, I could at times look hopefully into the future, and "bid the lovely scenes at distance hail!" The prospect was now before me of that change in my domestic life which anticipation always presents in glowing colours, and which to me in its consummation realised all the happiness my sanguine imagination had painted.

During my absence on the continent the young actress, Miss Atkins, whose innocence and beauty had made so deep an impression on me, had removed with her family to Dublin, where her talents were appreciated, and were in the course of successful development. Our correspondence continued there, and became more frequent and more intimate. A sudden and heavy calamity befel her in the death of her father and brother, who were drowned with most of the passengers in the Liverpool packet, wrecked through the misconduct of the captain in a calm sea at mid-day on the Skerries Rocks. Such a disaster could not fail to weigh with most depressing influence on her spirits, and to draw

forth the tenderest expressions of sympathy and condolence from me. The actual state of my feelings I could no longer conceal from myself. I indulged in the pleasing dream that my interest in this young creature was limited to a friendly and paternal solicitude for her welfare and professional advancement: and now awoke to the undeniable conviction that love was the inspiration of all the counsel and assistance I had rendered her. This disclosure was no longer withheld from her: her answer to my declaration and proposals was acquiescence in all my views, and under her mother's sanction it was settled between us that our marriage should take place as soon as possible compatibly with the arrangements to which I was bound. It is but simple justice to her beloved memory to repeat the truth that, although in a worldly sense I might have formed a more advantageous connection, I could not have met with qualities to compare with the fond affection, the liveliness, and simple worth that gave happiness to so many years of my life.

My country engagements occupied my whole summer, and though almost every night was given to acting, and every morning to rehearsing, it was the willing and remunerative labour of a captive released from most galling shackles in my emancipation from my Covent Garden bondage. My course lay through Swansea to Birmingham and Leicester; thence to Leeds, where I was most hospitably entertained by a family of the name of Wilkinson. Their house, a very handsome one, was at a short distance from the town, situated picturesquely in well laid-out grounds. Night and morning their carriage was at my disposal to convey me to and from the theatre, which was crowded every evening. To my great satisfaction I now received overtures from Elliston, and our negotiation was agreeably concluded by my acceptance of his offer of £20 per night for the ensuing Drury Lane season.

From Leeds to Newcastle, where I next halted, was a continuation of my productive labours, easily and pleasantly made, but an engagement I had entered into at Southampton for the following week, and which I could not induce the managers to alter, subjected me to journeys which railroads have smoothed down to a few hours' trip, but which in the days of posting were a very serious matter. At Southampton I had

to act four nights, and then return northward as far as Montrose. This stretch required some management. I therefore left my carriage and servant at Newcastle, taking the mail to London, and on to Southampton, where I acted to overflowing houses four nights. A post-chaise was at the stage-door of the theatre there on Thursday night, in which, after acting in both play and entertainment, I set out for London, where I arrived in good time on Friday morning. My day in London was entirely occupied with business, and at half-past eight at night I took my seat again in the mail for Newcastle. There my servant, according to the directions left with him, had my carriage drawn up to the door of the Queen's Head Hotel, and stepping out of the mail into it on Sunday morning, I continued, by dint of bribes to the postilions, my journey a-head of the mail through Edinburgh to Montrose, where I arrived in time to go to the rehearsal of 'King Richard III.' at two o'clock on Monday, acting the part in good spirits the same evening. I am thus particular in showing that I had no opportunity of seeing newspapers (which were neither so numerous nor so cheap as they now are), nor of knowing what was passing in the world beyond the track of my carriage-wheels. A night's performance in a provincial theatre usually absorbed my whole day. My rehearsals, to which I gave the strictest attention, both in regard to my own character and those of the players concerned with me, detained me daily at the theatre from ten or eleven till one or two o'clock. My very moderate dinner was necessarily followed by partial rest to recruit my spirits after the wearying, depressing business of rehearsing; and what might remain of the afternoon was generally employed in reading or thinking over the character I had to represent. I certainly so far devoted myself to my art, that I suffered no call of pleasure to interfere with it.

On the Tuesday morning after the performance of 'Richard' at Montrose, the manager, Mr. Ryder, calling at my hotel to inquire after me, told me he had just parted from the editor of the local paper, who had been loud in his praise of my acting, but had a "difficulty in reconciling my portraiture of such a villain as Richard III. with the noble acts of my life." On inquiring to what he alluded, "Oh, Sir," replied Mr. Ryder, "he was so excited by the account of your rescuing that child

from the fire!" "Good heavens," I exclaimed, "how came that story here?" "Why, Sir, it was in the *Courier*." "Oh, pray," said I, "beg of him to contradict it." "Why, Sir, he has copied it into his own paper of to-day!" It seems, as I afterwards learned, that the editor of the Southampton paper had seen the magazine, of which I have given an account, and, in eulogizing my performances, appended this story of 'the child' to his critique. My friend Mudford, editor of the *Courier*, delighted to meet with an adventure in my life so creditable, as he thought, to me, gave it extensive publicity by transferring it to the columns of the *Courier*, the paper, at that time, of the widest circulation in the country. In consequence, and in spite of my frequent contradictions, I have been haunted through my life by the apparition of this romantic tale, which every now and then would find its way again into print to my inexpressible annoyance. How the romance (first printed by the editor of the magazine in May, 1821) got birth, I have vainly tasked my brain to discover and never could divine, unless it arose from some incorrect version of the two children rescued from the falling house in Newcastle, magnified and exaggerated by each succeeding narrator like the story of 'The Three Black Crows.'

My engagement with Ryder lay through Dundee, Arbroath, and Perth, places interesting to me as recalling the early incidents and growth of that acquaintance that had now ripened into an attachment which gave almost daily employment to my pen in my double character of tutor and lover. In my southward course I made my way to Glasgow in order to pay a visit to Knowles and discuss with him the scenes he had completed and those projected of 'Caius Gracchus,' which was to be forwarded to Elliston at Drury Lane with all despatch. Dumfries, Carlisle, Whitehaven, and Kendal were taken in my route, where I repeated to crowded audiences the same characters, but with appurtenances and supporters that frequently brought the performance to the verge of the burlesque and sometimes overpassed it. On such occasions, wanting the patient and philosophic indifference of many of my craft, I could never dissever myself from the humiliating sense of at least a temporary connection with the perpetrators of the miserable makeshifts that often turned the spectators from

grave to gay, exciting laughter where the poet had prepared some of his most striking effects. One of the most ludicrous attempts to follow out the stage directions of the author at the least possible expense that I ever had the ill-luck to witness was at Kendal. The *corps dramatique* arrived in the town too late for the rehearsal of 'Virginius,' and I had to undergo during the two first acts a succession of annoyances in the scenic deficiences and in the inaccuracies of the players. My unhappy temper was severely tried under the repeated mortifications I experienced, but in the third act of the play, where Siccius Dentatus should be discovered on a bier with a company of soldiers mourning over it, I saw the old man, who represented the Roman Achilles, lying on the ground, and two men standing near. This was too absurd; the body having to be borne off in sight of the audience. I positively refused to go on. "Oh, pray, Sir," urged the manager, "go on: the men have rehearsed the scene, and you will find it all right." In vain I represented that the men "could not carry off the old man." "Oh, yes, indeed, Sir," reiterated the manager, "they perfectly understand it." There was nothing for it but submission. After some delay the scene was drawn up and disclosed the three as described. On I went and uttered my lamentation over the prostrate veteran, but when I gave the order "Take up the body, bear it to the camp"—to my agony and horror the two men, stooping down, put each an arm under the shoulder of the dead Dentatus, raised him upon his feet, he preserving a corpse-like rigidity, his eyes closed, and his head thrown back, and arm-in-arm the trio marched off at the opposite side of the stage amid roars of laughter from the convulsed spectators. I need not observe how difficult it was for audience or actor to recover their serenity after such a travestie.

Two or three days were at my disposal to visit the Lake country, affording me views of Ullswater, Keswick, the ascent of Skiddaw, and a search for the Cataract of Lodore, which I found with scarcely a drop of water in it. But my visit to Rydal, even had I missed the beauties of this romantic region, would have been worth a journey, since it gave me an introduction to the poet whose works had been so long my study and delight. It was afternoon when I called at Rydal Mount, and sent in my card. Mrs. Wordsworth and his sister received

me. Wordsworth was alone in the dining-room, with the blinds down to relieve his eyes, from the weakness of which he was suffering. He welcomed me very cordially, and as I had no objection to the gloom of the apartment, he talked long and most pleasantly, till, learning that I was on my way to Ambleside, whither I had sent on the carriage, he proposed accompanying me. His son joined us on our way, and few walks have been more agreeable to me or more memorable than that. He talked much; and much of his own poetry, and in me had a ready and delighted listener. I recollect his sonorous repetition of lines not then published, which have since appeared in print, that impressed themselves on my memory:

> "Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
> The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
> 'Tis done; and in the after vacancy
> We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed." *

I inquired of him whether the beautiful poem on the Yew Tree related to any real person, but he said it was purely imaginative. I think he repeated from a little pamphlet he gave me on the Lake scenery those lines on Kilchurn Castle in Loch Awe:

> "Child of loud-throated war! the mountain stream
> Roars in thy hearing: but thy hour of rest
> Is come, and thou art silent in thine age."

As we passed I ordered my dinner at an inn at Ambleside, and we continued our walk to the lake, where we took boat, and his son and I pulled down towards the further end and back, Wordsworth, like the pastor in his 'Excursion,' holding our attention with his remarks on the beauty of the evening and the scenery. They sat with me whilst I dined at the inn, and returning at twilight with me in the carriage to Rydal Mount, I took my leave of them there. Wordsworth wished me very much to call on Southey at Keswick, but the evening was too far advanced; my furlough had expired, and I had to rise with the very early morning to make my way to York, where my excellent friend Mansel, one of the few in this profession

* The passage commencing with these lines was first printed as a motto to the 'White Doe of Rylstone.' It afterwards appeared in its place in 'The Borderers,' a drama, in the last published volume of Wordsworth's poems.—ED.

entitled to the distinction of a "thorough gentleman," was expecting me to act in his theatre during the festival week.

This was the first occasion of the Minster having been appropriated to the performance of an oratorio: Catalani, Mrs. Salmon, Deborah Travis, Braham, and all the *élite* of the musical world appearing in the orchestra. On no occasion that I can remember have I listened with more enrapt delight to the strains of Handel and Haydn, with which the grandeur and beauty of this majestic edifice seemed so perfectly to harmonise. By some it may be deemed a species of heresy to regard these noble temples, our cathedrals, as ill-calculated for the service of Protestant worship. It is, however, indisputable that the voice of the preacher or reader can rarely reach without violent effort through their vast expanse, and in consequence only a portion of them, the chancel, is reserved for divine service; but in this performance of sacred music every note of the vocalist and the finest tone of the instruments are distinctly heard at the furthest extremity of the galleries, that raise the auditor nearly to the roof of the building at its most distant range. Not only the powerful voice of Catalani and the silvery organ of Mr. Salmon, but the syllabic utterance of Deborah Travis as she warbled the hymn of 'Adeste fideles' made its way distinctly to the very remotest corner of the stately edifice. The streets swarmed with visitors and the theatre was nightly crowded, so that in all ways I profited; and my friend and host, Mansel, was enriched by his speculation.

A fortnight's performances at Liverpool and Manchester brought me to the end of my summer's country engagements, my appearance at Drury Lane being fixed for Monday, October 13th, 1823, in the character of Virginius. Why there should be a preference between two theatres of the same size and in the same city not one hundred yards apart, it does not seem difficult to understand, for in that little distance there was a great difference. All had been long familiar to me at Covent Garden; with the stage, the green-room, and the actors I was, as it were, at home. At Drury Lane everything and everybody was strange to me. There was besides a want of regularity and attention behind the scenes, and of regard to strict good manners in the green-room, that made me feel myself like the citizen of another community. I was in

consequence nervous and unusually anxious: but my old maxim was present to me, to "do my best in whatever I might have to do," and with this resolution I entered on the scene and met with such a reception from an overflowing house as gave a quickening energy to my endeavours, and in the crowning plaudits of the audience assured me of my position in their favour. 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Rob Roy,' and 'Leontes' had their various repetitions to crowded houses, with a melodrama called the 'Cataract of the Ganges,' in which real water and real horses were introduced as very attractive adjuncts.

My sister, who had passed the summer with different friends in the country, met me on my arrival in town at our lodgings in Conduit Street, and it was of course a matter of primary necessity to break to her my engagement with my Catherine. Women have an intuitive penetration in affairs of the heart, that our less fine perceptions were often blinded to. The interest with which I had always spoken of this innocent girl had a significance in her eyes that I had not anticipated, and, though a little startled, she was less surprised than I expected when I imparted to her my intention of marrying Miss Atkins. My Catherine, in parting with her mother, whose friends and relatives were in Scotland, had taken up her temporary abode at Worthing as a retired quiet watering-place, where she could await the promised visit of my sister and myself, which depended entirely on the Drury Lane arrangements. My sister, who was indeed a devoted friend, had proposed, that Catherine, as her guest, should spend some weeks with us in London previous to our marriage, in order to improve their mutual acquaintance and cement their friendship. All parties were gratified by this proposal, and the opportunity for our journey soon occurred. At the request of Mrs. Glover I consented to act Virginius at Brighton for her daughter's benefit. On this our plan was formed for my sister to take her seat with me in the carriage to Worthing, and after her introduction to my betrothed, we were to go in company to Brighton, and the next day return altogether to London.

It is Byron's record, that the memory of sorrow is "a sorrow still," and it is but too true that events will happen in our lives so painful that their very remembrance is a sadness. My sister, I have no doubt, through the exaggerating and

deceptive medium of sisterly partiality, believed that she saw in me merits far beyond any title I could make to them, and would have thought a Sophia Western, or indeed a paragon, "formed of one entire and perfect chrysolite," not above my pretensions. To some such affectionate extravagance of judgment I must refer, to account for the distressing issue of this fondly expected meeting. Unmistakable disappointment, indeed repulsion, was expressed in my sister's look and manner as she took Catherine's hand. No word in consequence was interchanged between them. Disconcerted and distressed as I was, my endeavours to reason with one or console the other were alike unavailing. The day was one of the most wretched in my whole life. It was not possible to alter the plan determined on. We were obliged to go forward to Brighton, and my place in the carriage was between the two dearest beings in existence, alienated from each other, as I feared, by a demonstration of aversion, uncontrollable, and too probably mutual. Arrived at the Clarence Hotel, Brighton, my sister retired to her room and lay till late in the afternoon on her bed, drowned in tears. My poor Catherine was in little better plight, whilst I, half-distracted and bewildered in my endeavours at reconciliation, could be but a sorry comforter. Towards evening in an interview with my sister she avowed the utter disappointment of the expectations my description of Catherine had led her to expect, but was strenuous in agreeing to the necessity of keeping my plighted word. She, however, strongly urged the postponement of our marriage, which would afford opportunity to Catherine to continue the studies in which she had been lately engaged; Catherine herself, she was confident, with the improvement she would make in the interim, would be happier in becoming my wife at a period a little more distant. To this proposal, humbling to her pride and trying as it was, the gentle girl assented without murmur or reserve.

It may be thought I might have taken a more authoritative tone, and in justice to the future partner of my life might have resisted a suggestion that tended, as a hope deferred, to make the heart sick; but my sister was no common friend to me, bound to me in indissoluble bonds, to whom I had always looked to partake my fortunes, and on whose opinion and advice I had the firmest reliance.

I had to hurry to the theatre, where I repeated by rote the speeches of Virginius, my harassed feelings not allowing me to give a thought to the words I was uttering, or even to have an ear for the applauses that followed them. Never on any occasion of my life was my mind so absent from the character I had to portray, for among those days marked in my life's vicissitudes by most agitating anxieties I can reckon few, if any, more melancholy, more miserable than this. But night, with rest, brought composure to our ruffled spirits, and next morning, pacified, if not quite conciliated, we returned to Conduit Street, each fortified with the resolution to make the best of the time before us. My sister lent her best assistance in aiding me in my duties of tutorage to my lovely and docile Griselda, and certainly rendered essential service by her co-operation; for not only in acquirement from study but even in outward appearance did my dear pupil confirm by most delightful evidence the opinion I had always maintained of her wonderful aptness for improvement.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1823–1824.—Knowles's 'Caius Gracchus'—Ugo Foscolo—Kean declines to act with Macready—Theodore Hook—Hostility of part of the London press—Purchase of the Granby Hotel at Harrogate—Letter from sister to future wife.

ON the 18th of November, 1823, Knowles's tragedy of 'Caius Gracchus,' which had been some time in rehearsal, was produced. This play, although not one of the best from the gifted author's pen, abounds in passages of lofty thought, and is marked by the impress of his genius with that truth of character so constantly observable in his writings. But among scenes of striking power, pathetic situations, and bursts of heroic passion, there is great inequality. Whole pages are given to the cavillings of the plebeians, who in their contentions neither sustain the dignity of tragedy nor recall the idea of the Roman people. Indeed the mob, though advancing the action but little, is too prominent an agent, whilst the familiar language of their altercations often descends to vulgarity. But in the poet's conception and draught of Cornelia we see before us the mother of the Gracchi, the ideal of the Roman matron. She gazes on her offspring with all a mother's fondness, but with an unflinching eye looks through the transitory brightness of the present to the darker destiny that awaits the future, and steels her soul to the inevitable sacrifice of her beloved son upon the altar of his country.

"I did rear my boys
Companions for the Gods! Why wonder I
If they will go to them ere other men?
Many a time when they have stood before me—
Such things as mothers seldom look upon—
And I have seemed to feed on them with mine eyes,
My thoughts have pondered o'er their bier, where they

Lay stiff and cold! I would not see them so
If I could help it, but I would not help it
To see them otherwise and other men."

When, elevated to the tribuneship, Caius meets and kneels before her, the prayer she offers up is worthy of the daughter of Scipio:

"May the great Gods, who crown'd thee with this triumph,
Instruct thee so to use it as to bless
Thy country! With a firm and mighty hand
May'st thou uphold the laws, and keep them ever
Above the proud man's violence, and within
The poor man's reach. So shall thy mother—Rome—
Acknowledge thee her son, and teach thy name
To the applauding tongues of after ages!"

How entirely the motive power of the hero's acts was derived from the superior mind of the mother is beautifully instanced in the remonstrance he makes to her when her fortitude is on the point of giving way to her affection:

"Remember you Misenum, mother?
Once from its promontory we beheld
A galley in a storm; and as the bark
Approached the fatal shore, could well discern
The features of the crew, with horror all
Aghast, save one. Alone he strove to guide
The prow, erect amidst the horrid war
Of winds and waters raging. With one hand
He ruled the hopeless helm—the other strain'd
The fragment of a shiver'd sail; his brow
The while bent proudly on the scowling surge,
At which he scowl'd again. The vessel struck!
One man alone bestrode the wave, and rode
The foaming courser safe! 'Twas he, the same!
You clasped your Caius in your arms and cried,
'Look, look, my son! The brave man ne'er despairs,
'And lives where cowards die!' I would but make
Due profit of your lesson."

But though instances of power and pathos may be multiplied from the poet's page, yet it must be admitted there is a want of sustained progressive interest in the plot, the fluctuation of party triumph not very actively agitating the hopes and fears of the auditors. The death of Gracchus, stabbing himself with the dagger concealed under the folds of his toga, is nobly conceived, and was startling in its effect. In Caius the passion

of the more energetic parts and the tenderness of the domestic interviews laid strong hold on my sympathies, and I gave myself to the study of the part with no ordinary alacrity and ardour. In few original dramas had my individual success been more decisive; and even with the inefficient support it received—for Terry was the only artist that really rendered aid to it—the play would have enjoyed a much longer run but for the discreditable interposition of the stage-manager, who, from the inability of his wife, an actress of but moderate power, to grasp a character that required the commanding genius of a Siddons, insisted on its withdrawal.*

From the theatre, with the cheers of the audience and the congratulations of friends still ringing in my ears, I adjourned with Talfourd, Wallace, Procter, and other friends to Joy's coffee-house, our usual retreat after such excitement, and there prolonged our festivity to a very late, or rather early, hour in libations of champagne-punch to the continued prosperous career of 'Caius Gracchus.' The morning hours were hastening on when I reached Conduit Street, and a severe head-ache, the consequence of my imprudence, kept me in bed until late in the day. It was about ten o'clock that my servant awoke me, presenting me, to my great surprise and discomfort, with

* *From the Morning Herald.—November 19th*, 1823, *Drury Lane*, '*Caius Gracchus.*'—"The main support of the play, as might be expected, was Macready's Caius Gracchus; and when we say that it was a piece of acting not at all inferior to his Virginius, and that the passages of conjugal tenderness and emotion were as true to nature in the present character as those of paternal feeling in the former, we shall have said enough perhaps to satisfy even his most ardent admirers. But if we proceed to more particular discrimination, we must point to the scene with his mother, in which he extorts her reluctant approbation to his going forth to the assembly of the people to vindicate his Tribunitian laws, and the final scene, in which he quietly buries the poniard in his heart under the concealment of his robe. In both of these he exhibited all the effect of genuine acting without any of the trick or ostentation of the art. In the former in particular the contrasted quietness and mortified submission with which he pronounced, 'I would have shown I was your son if you would have let me,' and the dignified firmness with which, in reply to his mother's inquiry, 'If I lose you what will remain to me?' he exclaims, 'My monument!' were very finely, the latter even thrillingly, expressive; and the manner in which he first bows down his head in pensive determination, and afterwards lifts it up in farewell resignation to the Gods, preparatory to the fatal act, was not less powerfully excitive of the noblest sympathies."

the card of my friend Ugo Foscolo, who wished to speak with me on very urgent business. On being informed that I was still in bed, and could not well receive him before noon, he posted off in a violent hurry to our common friend Wallace, from whom I afterwards learned the object of his visit, which was to ask me to be the bearer of a hostile message from him to G—— of whom I have before made mention, and of whom I had lost sight for many months. G——, to whom he, Foscolo, had given an asylum in his house, and supplied with employment that was a means of livelihood to him, had seduced one of the maid-servants of Foscolo, an exceedingly pretty young woman, in whom Foscolo took particular interest. His Italian blood was set on fire by the ungrateful return of his unworthy guest, and he commissioned Wallace to be the bearer of his cartel. The time and conditions of the meeting were arranged between Wallace and G——'s second; upon which Foscolo stated his determination to Wallace that the combat should be *à outrance.* Wallace on this distinctly told him that on such an understanding he could not go to the field with him, that his honour was in his second's hands, and that he must either conform to the usage of English gentlemen on such occasions or find some other friend. Foscolo was of course obliged to submit, and therefore, when on the ground, as he could not gratify his revenge in a more deadly manner, he resorted to the alternative of expressing his supreme contempt for his adversary by receiving his fire without deigning to discharge his own pistol. Upon which Wallace intimated to the other second that he could not allow his friend to remain any longer on the ground, and the parties separated without another word. There would be every reason to believe that G—— was perfectly insensible to the romantic disdain of his high-minded antagonist. A very little time sufficed to bring to a close his reckless and desperate course in London. The forgery of a bill—I believe for £500 on the house of Whitaker and Co.—obliged him to fly from justice, and he soon after was heard of as a passenger on board a packet-ship from Liverpool to New York.

Poor Ugo Foscolo! As a scholar, poet, novelist, and critic he enjoyed a European reputation. In his social relations he was most amiable. Born of a noble house in Venice, he had served under Napoleon, and for one season had been the lion of the

London aristocracy; but experience has taught us how short-lived is such a distinction, and Foscolo lived to feel the instability of friendships based upon temporary popularity. He died neglected, if not forgotten, in one of the London suburbs. He had his weaknesses and peculiarities—who is exempt from them? Personal vanity was among them. Very plain in his person, it was the exception he made in his admiration of English women, to their endearing qualities, that none of them could be brought to make the declaration, "*Je vous aime!*" Though ordinarily of a most gentle disposition, he was liable to gusts of temper which were more provocative of laughter than of anger among his familiars. He was a great chess-player, but the loss of a game was too much for his equability. His customary adversary was an old friend and neighbour, who, knowing his excitability, always took this precaution before making the move which was to give him check-mate: he would shuffle himself half out of his chair, getting ready for a start, and as he moved his piece on the board and muttered "Check-mate," rush out of the room under the never-failing expectation of hearing the board and its contents, sent by the hands of Foscolo, come rattling after him. 'Jacopo Ortis' was his first work, and that at once established his reputation. He published his tragedy of 'Ricciardetta' in London, where he contributed many articles to the *Edinburgh Review*.

One object in this Drury Lane engagement, and that of especial import, on which the manager speculated, was the association of Kean's magnetic name with my own in a series of plays agreed on between Elliston and myself, viz: 'Venice Preserved,' 'Julius Cæsar,' 'King John,' 'Jane Shore,' &c. From such a coalition Elliston anticipated a long and most productive season. But although he raised Kean's terms on this occasion from £30 per week to £20 per night, in order to remove all possible ground of complaint, Kean remained firm in his resolution not to consent to the proposed combination. He paid me, according to green-room report, the compliment of saying, he "Did not mind Young, but he would not act with Macready." My engagement was in consequence so far a disappointment that it was limited to its specified number of nights,—forty,—instead of being extended, as was hoped,

through the greater part of the season. The first division of those nights was satisfactorily concluded; and till the month of April 1824, when the second would commence, and in which the hope was not altogether abandoned that Kean would yield to the representations of the management, my time was to be occupied with provincial engagements. My lodgings were given up, and it was agreed in our little home council that it would be best for my Catherine to continue the prosecution of her studies in the family of a respectable widow lady at Kensington, most highly recommended, until the close of my Drury Lane engagement, which would leave me with sufficient holiday to ensure a honeymoon, and perfect freedom from business to solemnise most happily our long-deferred marriage.

I have alluded to the evil influence of a cabal that was set on foot against me by the partisans of the Covent Garden management. From the insidious calumnies, which obtained wide circulation, I became exposed to the systematic hostility of a great part of the London press, from which I suffered, and against which I had to contend for several years. The originator of the prejudice with which I had to struggle was Mr. Theodore Hook, a man of ready powers of sarcasm, of unblushing effrontery, with a quick sense of the humorous, and if not witty, was possessed of smartness that made a very near approach to wit. On the occasion of my appearance this season at Drury Lane, when all the papers were lavish in their praise, as the editor of the *John Bull* he reprobated the eulogistic language used towards me, but was willing to give me credit for my humanity in rescuing a child from the fire (Oh! that child!). Unwilling to accept unmerited commendation, I wrote to the editor of the *John Bull*, disclaiming all pretension to the romantic act ascribed to me, but desirous of avoiding (as I have always been) the intrusion of my name in reference to any personal matter on the public, I marked my letter *private*. Mr. Hook took advantage of this to state in a subsequent article that I had written to him in perfect agreement with his opinions, expressing my contempt for and disgust at the adulatory notices that my friends had published. I need scarcely say how shocked and pained I was by such a statement, which must make enemies of those who in their

indulgent estimation of my performances had hitherto sustained and befriended me.

The principle that actuated this gentleman in his dealings with his fellow men is not to be mistaken. Poor Conway allowed himself to be the victim of this man's abuse, and, wanting in strength of mind to endure the sneers and derisive personal attacks with which he was constantly assailed, retired from the stage, which afforded him a respectable income, and which could ill spare the degree of talent he possessed. Things that near to the sight look large become diminished by distance, and matters that have importance in our eyes at the moment sink into insignificance with the lapse of time. I wonder now at my own sensitiveness on occasions like this, but this is the player's weakness; his reputation lives in the opinion of his contemporaries, and it is with feverish jealousy that he watches the rise and fall of public favour. In my own case there was an injury craftily, and to a certain point successfully, inflicted; for it was only natural that men of education, as the contributors to the English press are known to be, should feel indignant at what must seem my insolence and ingratitude. This statement, set abroad together with some false and libellous assertions of my ill-treatment of dramatic authors, which, written, as I have good reason to believe, by a London clergyman, appeared sometime after in *Blackwood's Magazine*, excited against me, as might be expected, a hostile spirit, which only years of patient and persevering effort enabled me to live down.

Leaving most reluctantly my future bride in her strange home at Kensington, I set out with my sister about the middle of December on my provincial tour. Our course was to Exeter, Plymouth, and Bristol, from whence with a rich harvest we proceeded to Dublin; here was a long engagement before me, which the repetitions of 'Virginius,' and the frequent performances of Cassius in 'Julius Cæsar,' made a very attractive one. Belfast was my next resort, and in returning through Dublin Mr. Harris detained me for one more representation of Cassius by the douceur of £50. Our route lay onward to Manchester, Blackburn, Halifax, Glasgow Hull, York, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sunderland, Stamford, each of which places contributed liberal additions to my banker's

account, and on the 10th of April we were again in London, where the remaining nights of my engagement with Elliston were to be played out. Our lodgings were taken in Mornington Place, then a suburban row of houses looking over the fields towards Highgate.

In looking out for investments for my little savings I was persuaded by George Robins, the famous auctioneer, to bid for a property then advertised by him for sale, the Granby Hotel at Harrogate, a large establishment, with offices complete, and land and plantation attached to it. He recommended the purchase for £6000, though I had not much more than half that amount to dispose of. The rest was left on mortgage, and would have been a very profitable investment if I had had a solicitor faithful to my interests: as it was it turned out rather an indifferent speculation. Some of the newspapers diverted themselves and their readers with the poor joke of my "going to the bar," as the owner of a great hotel!

Kean persisting in his refusal to appear in the plays with me, the repetition of the parts I had before acted, with the performance of the Duke in 'Measure for Measure' (a character in which dignity of demeanour and lofty declamation are the chief requisites), brought me to the end of my engagement on the 23rd of June, 1824, in the part of Cardinal Wolsey. On leaving the stage I hurried on my clothes and drove rapidly home, to prepare for an early rising on the following morning. My term of penance and that of my Catherine's probation and exemplary patience were happily accomplished, and the morrow was to establish her as the future mistress of my home. The following letter from the excellent Archdeacon of London met me on my return from the theatre:

"*June 23rd.*

"My dear Sir,—I shall not fail to be in readiness for you at a quarter past eight, and rejoice much to be connected with an event which I trust will be followed by every blessing which your kindest friends can wish, among whose number pray include,

"Yours faithfully,

"J. W. Pott."

In justice to the beloved memory of her whose affection and amiability shed happiness over so many years of my life, and not less to the sage counsel of my dear sister's friendship, I

copy out the letter addressed to her a few days before our marriage:—

"*Monday Morning*, 34 *Mornington Place.*

"MY DEAR CATHERINE,—I have not yet congratulated you upon the near approach of your union with my beloved brother, which I now do with true and heartfelt sincerity, and with the most ardent wishes for the happiness of you both, and I feel no doubt of those wishes being fulfilled to the utmost. You once, my dear girl, asked me 'if I loved you:' it was an abrupt question, and I made you no direct answer, nor would I, till I could do it with sincerity and truth. You will not (or I am mistaken) value that love the less because not given hastily. Now you may ask the question when you like; but you need not ask it: I do love you truly, and ever shall, whilst you make happy a brother so very dear to me. Let me no longer hear myself addressed by the formal title of *Miss:* we shall soon be sisters, I trust, in affection as well as name—then call me Letitia.

"Adieu, and believe me

"Ever your sincerely affectionate

"LETITIA MACREADY."

CHAPTER XIX.

1824–1825.—Marriage—Wedding tour—Kite-Carriage on Salisbury plain—Country engagements—Drury Lane season—'Fatal Dowry'—Severe illness—'William Tell'—Tour in North Wales—Cottage at Denbigh—Country engagements.

THURSDAY, June 24th, 1824, the day long looked for, was at last reached—a day consecrated to memory by the years of home endearments and domestic felicity that take their date from it. My friend Wallace and my sister accompanied the bride to St. Pancras Church, where I was awaiting with my solicitor, Barker, their arrival. The Archdeacon was of course punctual in his kind attendance, and with his blessings, on the conclusion of the ceremony, we set out on our short wedding-tour. At Hounslow, where our breakfast had been ordered, we very soon arrived, and changed our bridal dresses for travelling costume. There Wallace, who had followed our carriage from London, took leave of us.

Through what varied scenes, what fluctuations of feeling, what agitating events, the mind has to travel back in recurring to that happy day! Long years of joys and sorrows benignly alternated by the Divine Dispenser! "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn," and for the predominance of good in mine, mainly attributable, under Heaven, to the dear partner of its trials, I can never think without emotions of the deepest gratitude.

Wedding-tours offer little variety. The mind is so absorbed in its own ruminations, its consciousness of present happiness, its anticipations and reflections, that external objects lose much of their interest. The sunshine we carried with us could not be dimmed by the morning's heavy rain; and a bright after-

noon was hailed by us as an omen of our future. Our route lay through Basingstoke to Andover, and the next day through Salisbury to Stonehenge. Whilst loitering here in contemplation of the rugged and sublime monuments of a barbarous superstition whose rude grandeur rivets the gaze of the beholder, our attention was drawn to faint sounds as of distant music, that grew louder, as if advancing towards us with great rapidity. We could soon distinguish the notes of a key-bugle well played, and, looking out in the direction from whence it came, perceived a small dark mass moving down the incline of the road with extreme velocity. As it came more palpably in sight we perceived it to be a rude carriage, or rather a square box on four wheels, capable of holding three or four persons. As we stood gazing on its rapid course, we could not divine by what means it was impelled, till, looking up into the sky, we saw three large kites one above another at equal distances, to which strong light cords attached the vehicle. It came up to where we were standing by the Druidic Temple. Its conductor turned its side to the draught of the kites, and having fastened in the earth an anchor or grappling-iron, drew in the kites, which were of oiled silk, or some such light substance, and between five and six feet in height. After an interesting examination of this novel locomotive, which recalled Milton's lines, on

> "The barren plains
> Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
> With sails and wind their cany waggons light,"

and some conversation with the gentleman who managed it, we proceeded on our journey.

Five years afterwards, travelling from Colchester to London, and seated with my brother on the dickey of the carriage, we met and passed this very same kite-carriage; but though the experiment was perfectly successful in those two instances, I am not aware that any public notice has ever been taken of it.

Our course lay onward to Weston-super-Mare, then a small village with inferior accommodation, now a very handsome and populous watering-place. We passed from thence to Congresbury, the quiet beauty of which little rural place delighted us much, and detained us till a professional engagement at Taunton compelled me to return to the business of active

life. My time from this point was given to the duties of my profession. Swansea was my next halt, thence to Milford, and across to Waterford. My summer was spent among the different theatres of Ireland—Cork, Newry, Belfast, &c., during which I was subject to a succession of violent colds, that laid the foundation of an illness at a later date which nearly proved fatal to me. Engagements at Liverpool, Manchester, Chester, Shrewsbury, Leicester, and Sheffield greatly improved my finances, and brought me to Monday, November 15th, 1824, when I re appeared at Drury Lane in the character of Macbeth. This was followed by Leontes, Jaques, King John, and Cardinal Wolsey, and a novelty of much interest in the revival of Massinger's tragedy of 'The Fatal Dowry,' produced Wednesday, January 5th, 1825. The original work is one of very great power, but unhappily disfigured by scenes too gross for presentation before an audience making pretension to any degree of refinement. Sheil undertook the task of its purification, and in its adaptation, whilst maintaining the strictest fidelity to the story, substituted scenes which, in energy, passion, and dramatic power, fully equalled those on which they were grafted. The parts of Rochfort and Charolois were very well represented by Terry and Wallack, and in Romont opportunities were afforded for the display of energy and lofty bearing, to the full height of which I laboured, not unsuccessfully, to reach; but though a great writer says, "*Il n'y a point de hasard*," we often find results under the sway of casualties. The play was well acted, and enthusiastically applauded: its repetition for the following Tuesday was hailed most rapturously; but Friday came, and with it a crowded house, to find me labouring under such indisposition that it was with difficulty I could keep erect without support. My disorder was inflammation of the diaphragm, which for some time threatened the worst consequences. Earle was attending me, and after ineffectual resort to the sharpest remedies, became greatly alarmed. Dr. Maton, whose name has lived in my memory as, under God, my life's preserver, was called in. After some days of doubt and apprehension he pronounced me out of danger: an announcement that brought relief and consolation to the hearts of my young wife and sister, worn down by their watchings and constant attendance on my sick bed.

It was indeed from the grave's brink I had been rescued, and to the mercy that restored me more than even life was owing. When at the worst extremity the kind Archdeacon visited me with the sustaining comfort of religion in the administration of the Holy Sacrament, and from that period I date a more serious contemplation of life's duties. My spirits, which up to this illness had retained all their boyish vivacity and exuberance, became greatly sobered, and this visitation I have ever since regarded, as an inestimable good out of a temporary ill, in the light of a most especial grace.

When able to leave my bed, which for several weeks I was not permitted to do, change of air was recommended, and Cheltenham considered as likely, by its mild atmosphere, to renovate my exhausted frame. Here we remained nearly a fortnight, and thence proceeded to Little Malvern, where for upwards of two months I enjoyed the quiet of a comfortable cottage residence, and in the pure air of its beautiful hills, by constant exercise of riding and walking, was rapidly recruiting my impaired strength.

In my marriage I had realised all that the most sanguine heart could have pictured to itself of happiness. The studies my Catherine had taken up with so much earnestness before our union she continued, I may say, throughout her after life, and she never entirely relinquished the character of pupil, in wearing that which she so gracefully did, of "wife and friend," improving her acquaintance with the best writers in French and Italian, and making herself conversant with the works of Milton, Locke, Bacon, and our leading authors in poetry and prose; so that my indoor life most agreeably diversified my enjoyments and occupations abroad.

My engagement with Elliston, which my illness had so suddenly broken up, was renewed for the latter part of the Drury Lane season. From the impression made in the winter by the performance of the 'Fatal Dowry,' and the high encomiums of the press, sanguine expectations were entertained of its successful career on the announcement of my return to appear in the part of Romont, on the 11th of April (1825.) But here was one among the many instances of accident baffling calculation. In the interim between the revival of Massinger's tragedy and my return to London public excitement had

been roused to an immoderate degree by occurrences that in their notoriety gave attraction which, in the more regular course of things, would not have exceeded the ordinary average. After the publication of the trials in which Kean and Miss Foote were severally parties, both Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres were for many weeks nightly crowded when those performers appeared; and in the interest of their *causes célèbres* the satiated public had lost sight of the ill-starred 'Fatal Dowry,' the simple but forcible passion of which was forgotten in the tumultuous contentions at one theatre, and the vociferous cheerings of party feeling at the other. It was a disappointment on many accounts to be lamented. A house had been taken for us on Hampstead Heath for the sake of my health, which as yet was but imperfectly restored, and on my reappearance at Drury Lane in the 'Fatal Dowry,' I had the questionable satisfaction of being warmly greeted by a very thin audience. The play was in consequence not repeated more than two or three times, and we had to fall back on 'Macbeth,' 'Virginius,' &c.

Meanwhile, Knowles had been busy with his play of 'William Tell,' which he brought to show me previous to presenting it to Elliston. The principal scenes in it are equal to the best that the gifted author has ever written; but in its original draught it could not have been more than partially successful. The conspirators before the gate of Altorf deciding in brief and prosaic language on the uprising of the Cantons against the power of Gesler, opened the play, which was the only introduction to the character of the hero. After the fall of Gesler, with which, of course, the interest of the play terminates, the invocation to the mountains, a soliloquy, was the subject-matter of a single scene, and the description of the eagle followed in another, suspending with mere poetical language the release of the audience. Knowles had less of the tenacity of authorship than most writers. He was open to conviction, and immediately that it was pointed out to him how much effect would be obtained by using these speeches in the early part of the play as developments of character and arguments of the story, he unhesitatingly made them introductions to the meeting on the field of Grutli, and brought the play rapidly to a close after the death of the tyrant. The scene in the second

act, where Tell gives his instructions to his son, and hears of the outrage on old Melchthal, is admirable; nor less entitled to praise are those between Tell and Gesler, which end in the archer striking the apple off his son's head. There is much in parts of the play that partakes of the quality of melodrama, but the scenes above mentioned would compensate for many grave delinquencies. The evidence of the little respect paid to the actor's art by our managers, who were for the most part mere tradesmen in their craft, was instanced in the production of this novelty. The condition of the treasury made it desirable that it should be hurried out, and although, from the alterations required, the text was not given to me in time to perfect myself in the words of the last act, I was importuned and, I may truly say, worried into running the hazard of its performance, trusting to momentary impulse for much of my effect (a very dangerous reliance), and even under the necessity, during the progress of the performance, of learning what I could of the concluding scene. As it fell out I did, however, manage to speak the text, or something near it; and the fall of the curtain was followed with acclamations of applause. For my subsequent representations, which were frequent, I persevered in the study of the character, and made it one of my most attractive personations. Dexterity in the use of the bow was indispensable to the performance, and by dint of practice archery soon became a favourite exercise with me.

On the 2nd of June, 1825, I acted King Henry V. and Rob Roy for my benefit, and my engagement was brought to a close on the 18th with the performance of William Tell, now fully established in its attraction.

My confidence in the recovery of my strength had been, as I soon discovered, too hastily assumed, and it was considered advisable that I should seek in further repose and relaxation a more perfect re-invigoration of my system before launching again upon the course of regular professional work. Accordingly, after fulfilling the two engagements long since contracted at Cheltenham and Birmingham, my whole summer was given up to the amusement which a tour in North Wales afforded us. The heat this year was intense, and as one remarkable instance of it, I recollect in a lane near the town of Flint observing a man in pursuit of some swarms of bees that, as he informed

me, had left their hives in consequence of the sun having melted the wax of their combs, which was trickling down through the crevices of the wooden stand to the ground. The scenery of this beautiful country, however familiar it may become, can never pall upon the eye of taste, and it was with renewed interest I now revisited its crags and peaks, its mountains and its streams, blest as I was with such dear companionship. In our present wanderings there was an object beyond the mere gratification which the ever-varying landscape could afford us. My plans had been formed to visit America in the course of the following year, and as our voyage would be made from Liverpool, I wished to fix our residence for the intervening time within an easy distance of our place of embarkation. We cherished the hope of fixing our permanent abode on our return in one of those lovely valleys, either that of the Clwyd or Llangollen, and house-hunting became part of the business of our tour by St. Asaph, Abergele, Conway, Bangor, Llanrwst, &c.

At Llanrwst, hearing of a neat, commodious house to be "let furnished" near Denbigh, I rode across the mountains with our landlord's son to see it, and finding it very neatly and completely furnished, with good stabling, coach-house, garden, and field, the rent was soon agreed on, and "The Cottage, Denbigh," was decided on as our address till the autumn of 1826. This was a happy period to look back upon, one of the happiest of my life. Our cottage was all our moderate desires could covet: we had books, archery, a little stud of three ponies, good spirits, capacity of enjoyment, and much, very much, to enjoy. My Catherine's studies were always a source of interest and pleasing occupation for herself, and for me in my superintendence of them. We had visitors in our neighbours, and some friends from a distance as far as St. Asaph. Our home was a little paradise to us, and one we should have been contented never to leave. But the world had its demands upon us, and as the autumn advanced I was under the necessity of resuming my professional duties, and of making from time to time long absences from "the happy valley." With the end of September I began engagements that carried me to Southampton, Liverpool, Nottingham, Shrewsbury, Chester, Sheffield, Leicester, Lincoln, Newark, and

Edinburgh. In some of these places I had the company of my wife and sister, and after one week spent at home, continuing my active course to Plymouth and Exeter, I ended there the year 1825. My profits enabled me to pay off one mortgage on the Granby property of £720, and the year before me opened with the prospect of soon clearing away the remaining encumbrance.

CHAPTER XX.

1826.—Drury Lane—'First Part of King Henry IV.'—Elliston in Falstaff—His last appearance—Stephen Price of New York—American engagement—Farewell performance at Birmingham—The treasury of the theatre robbed—Generosity of Macready—Letters from Mr. Brunton and his company—Departure for America—Passage—Arrival at New York.

THE year 1826, up to the date of April 10th, was devoted to country engagements, varied by some short visits to my cottage home, and occasionally by the company of my wife and sister, as my fellow travellers. The management of Drury Lane theatre had been transferred from Elliston to his son, who, under the committee, now conducted the establishment, Elliston remaining as an actor of the company. The absence of Kean, who had gone to the United States again, made young Elliston very urgent with me to return to Drury Lane; but six weeks were all I could spare to London from my more profitable country engagements, by which I was now enabled to pay off above £1200 of the mortgage remaining on the Granby purchase. 'Macbeth' was the play advertised for my re-appearance at Drury Lane on Monday, April 10th, followed by the repetition of William Tell, Jaques, Leontes, Othello, Virginius, Leonatus Posthumus, Hotspur, &c. An interest more than ordinary attached to the reproduction of the 'First Part of King Henry IV.,' from Elliston's announcement in the part of Falstaff. The play was acted on Thursday, May 11th. Elliston was an actor highly distinguished by the versatility and power of his performances, but of late years he had somewhat "fallen from his high estate;" still such an announcement stimulated the curiosity of play-goers. His rehearsal gave me very great pleasure. I watched it most earnestly, and was satisfied that in it he made the nearest approach to the joyous humour and unctuous roguery

of the character that I had ever witnessed, giving me reason to entertain sanguine hopes of a great success in its performance; but, alas! whether from failure of voice or general deficiency of power, the attempt fell ineffectively upon the audience, and the character was left, as it has been since the days of Quin and Henderson, without an adequate representative. The play was repeated on Monday, May 15th, 1826. Before the curtain rose I was in the green-room, and spoke with Elliston, who complained of being ill, and appeared so, smelling very strongly of ether. As the evening wore on he gave signs of extreme weakness, was frequently inaudible, and several times voices from the front called to him to "speak up." There was not on this occasion even the semblance of an effort at exertion, and in the fifth act he remained silent for some little time, then, in trying to reach the side-scene, reeled round and fell prostrate before the foot-lights. It was a piteous spectacle! A sad contrast to the triumphs of his earlier popularity! The audience generally attributed his fall to intoxication, but without just cause. He was really indisposed, and the remedy from which he sought support was too potent. He was conveyed to his dressing-room almost insensible, and never appeared upon the stage again.

The following night was my benefit, when Young, never forgetful of the like courtesies he had received from me, acted Iago to my Othello. The house was well filled, and on the Saturday following I played for the last time in London previous to my departure for America. Leaving London, engagements at Bristol and Bath detained me another week from my cottage-home, whence, after the enjoyment of a short holiday, I proceeded to various country theatres. At Birmingham, now under the management of Mr. Richard Brunton, a truly worthy man, I acted one night with the desire of assisting him in his difficult enterprise. The receipt was £180, on which I reduced my charge to £30, leaving him very grateful and very happy at this unexpected addition to his resources. My plan of visiting the United States this year being now determined on, I went by appointment on the 22nd of July, 1826, to Liverpool, to meet there Mr. Stephen Price, the manager of the Park Theatre, New York, and conclude an agreement with him.

The burly appearance and bluff manners of the American manager did not much prepossess me, nor was I altogether at ease on finding him reluctant to commit to paper the terms of our contract. But I was resolute in refusing to undertake the voyage on a mere verbal engagement; and the conditions, £50 per night, were therefore finally recorded in black and white. This business was no sooner settled than he startled me with a piece of intelligence, as yet a secret, which sank like a dead weight on my spirits. He had become the lessee of Drury Lane theatre; Bish, the lottery-office keeper, to whom it had been let, having made over to him his agreement for a lease on very advantageous terms. Among the many injurious measures that weighed upon the theatrical art in our country this was a signal one, resulting from the mercenary character of the patentee. Objection to a foreigner as director of a national establishment, if qualified by talent and accomplishment for the office, must be considered narrow-minded and illiberal; but Mr. Price had no pretensions to justify his appointment. He was a reckless speculator, his betting-book for Epsom, Ascot, &c., being made up for him by Gully the pugilist, who had amassed a fortune by his ventures on the turf. He was boastful and overbearing, not popular even with his own countrymen; of the dramatic art he could only judge by the public appreciation; of dramatic literature he knew nothing; of the opportunities of education he had taken little or no advantage; in conversation his only argument was a wager: in short he was not a gentleman, and in an evil hour was permitted to preside over the fortunes of the British drama. But the only consideration of those to whom the patents of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres had been entrusted was the amount of interest they could obtain for their shares; the improvement of the public taste, the cultivation of dramatic literature, or the respectability of the audiences being subjects below their liberal and enlightened views.

The needful preparations for my departure now engrossed my attention. Having business to transact in London, I took leave of my friends there at a parting dinner at the Piazza coffee-house, and made arrangements at Denbigh for the care of my little property left behind during my absence. On Monday, August 21st, 1826, 'Hamlet' was acted at Birmingham, as a

farewell performance, to a crowded house, the receipts of which were to be equally divided between the manager and myself. An extract from a letter to my dear wife on this occasion will best relate the disastrous result:

"The house was £186 10s. My address, which was not expected, excited a very strong feeling, and was rapturously received. When Brunton came into my room with the account, I deducted with my pencil £26 10s. for him, and divided the remainder with him: £80 for myself, leaving £106 10s. for him, asking him if he was satisfied. He was exceedingly grateful, 'much more than satisfied.' Well, all this was very pleasant. He was to wait on me at my hotel, Hen and Chickens, the following morning with the cash. But on the following morning the news was brought by Mr. John Reynolds that the theatre had been entered by robbers in the night and £200 taken out of the treasury. Poor Brunton was in a dreadful state, on his own, and also on my account. He is much to be pitied, for these two nights, on which I have acted here, are the only ones that have reached £100 through the whole season. To set his mind in some measure at rest I have this morning written him a note as a receipt in full, releasing him from the debt of £80 in which he imagined himself engaged to me. The money is a severe loss, but I can bear it, and I thank God I can. To further reimburse poor Brunton, who would otherwise be unable to meet the salaries of his actors on Saturday, I have engaged to act Virginius here to-morrow evening. The boxes are I understand already all taken. I shall not receive a shilling for either night: it would not be right that I should—and you would be much prouder that your husband should be right than rich, would you not? I shall be at Cheltenham on Friday: you will I hope see me on Tuesday evening. Did you leave Denbigh, our ponies, and the hills with a heavy heart?"

On August 24th, 1826, as I had promised, I acted Virginius to a very full house, the receipt of which was £170 10s., a sum that lightened considerably the instant pressure on poor unfortunate Brunton. The letter* which he sent me on the

* "Theatre Royal, Birmingham, 23rd August, 1826.

"MY DEAR SIR,—If in the agitated state of my mind, occasioned by the variety of circumstances which have occurred, I should feel myself unable to reply to the unparalleled generosity and kindness which you have so generally manifested towards me, but more particularly in your note of this morning, you, I am sure, will excuse it. Of this, however, be assured, that your kindness shall ever live in the most grateful feelings of my heart, and it shall be my greatest pride through every action of my life to merit the high and enviable appellation you have been pleased to bestow on me, 'your friend.'

"RICHARD BRUNTON.

"To W. C. Macready, Esq., Hen and Chickens Hotel."

"Theatre Royal, Birmingham, August 24th, 1826.

"DEAR SIR,—Your truly liberal and disinterested conduct towards the head of the establishment of which we are members has excited in us all

morning of the 23rd is inserted below, with those which passed between Mr. Brunton's company and myself. My wife and sister left our cottage at Denbigh on the 24th, and awaited my arrival at Liverpool. One night's performance at Bristol on Monday, 28th, and one at Liverpool on Wednesday, 30th, closed my professional engagements for this year in England before audiences that received my parting acknowledgments with the warmest tokens of personal interest. The kind attentions of my

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so warm a feeling of admiration and esteem, that we are desirous, before you quit your native land, of offering you our cordial thanks for your generosity, in which we all indirectly participate, and our best wishes for your health, prosperity, and safe return. We honour the motives which have induced you to act as you have done on the present occasion, and we feel grateful to you, not only for this individual instance of your kindness, but for supporting by your example, both in public and private life, the respectability of a profession which has been too much degraded by many who ought to have sustained its credit and character. We regret that the British stage should lose you, even for a short period, but earnestly hope your talents will be as justly appreciated, and even more liberally rewarded in the New World than they have been in Britain, and that you will shortly return with a large increase of fame and fortune. Accept the humble tribute of our entire esteem, which we respectfully offer, and in bidding you farewell permit us to subscribe ourselves,

" Dear sir,

" Your obliged, and faithful servants,

"B. P. Bellamy,	I. Bland,
J. Salter,	C. Jones,
Thos. Stuart.	H. Montague,
Jas. Dobbs,	Miss Huddart,
Jno. Gardner,	S. E. Cook,
H. T. Gough,	Miss E. Tree,
I. T. Jones,	Eliza Middleton,
W. Larkin,	S. Tree,
J. H. Carter,	L. Pincott,
James Wilton,	H. Moreton,
F. Charles,	Eliza Southey,
Jno. W. Hayes,	Ja. Cook,
Ed. Southey,	H. Lacy,
C. Parsloe,	Mrs. Montague,
T. Richards,	Louisa Ashton.

" To W. Macready, Esq."

" Hen and Chickens Hotel, August 25th, 1826.

" My Dear Sir,—I return you and the ladies and gentlemen of the Birmingham theatre my heartfelt acknowledgments for the kind and flattering letter which you put into my hand last night. If I did not feel honoured and gratified by expressions so full of regard I must be insensible indeed. But you

old school-fellow, John Shaw Leigh, previous to our embarkation are not to be forgotten. The *Canada*, Captain Rogers, a vessel of 600 tons, one of the largest and swiftest of the line then running between New York and Liverpool, was our ship, and Friday, September 1st, the day appointed for its departure; but whether to humour the superstition of seamen, or from some other cause, we did not start till Saturday.

Our passage was a rough one, but, before the application of steam, was considered a good one, being made in twenty-six days, during most of which we were confined to our berths by the tempestuous weather, so that there was little opportunity for observation, one day only differing from another in the degree of rolling and tossing that we had to endure from the time we passed Cape Clear to our reaching the Narrows, the entrance to the beautiful bay of New York. Captain Rogers was a noble specimen of an American seaman; he had been sailing-master of Commodore Decatur. Our fellow-passengers were, with the exception of two British officers, commercial men, and not particularly interesting. Our chief acquaintance was Captain Lang of the 71st. He came down to my state-room (as the little closet in which I lay was called) one morning, to ask me if I had ever seen the manœuvre of wearing a ship, and begged me to come up, as they were preparing for the work. It was blowing very hard, and I had no great curiosity in respect to the operation; but I would not seem to undervalue his courtesy, and made the best of my way to the deck, where, holding fast by the companion, I saw our craft, that appeared in port of a conspicuous size, now tossed like a little cork in the deep trough of the sea, which was, in sea-phrase, running mountains high.

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overrate an act of ordinary good feeling. A far greater sacrifice than any I can have made would be more than compensated by your liberal estimation of it. I am therefore the more indebted to you, and through my life I shall treasure this friendly testimony of your approbation. From my heart I wish you generally and individually every success, and again thanking you most sincerely, and bidding you farewell,

"I am, dear sir,

"Yours and the ladies and gentlemen, most obliged, &c.,

"W. C. MACREADY.

To B. P. Bellamy, Esq., Theatre Royal, Birmingham."

I expected to see it submerged every minute; but she was brought round very cleverly, and I was glad to hurry down to my berth again.

We had been twenty-five days at sea, when, on the 27th of September, the cry of "land in sight" was repeated by numerous voices, and produced a sensation through the ship that, strange as it may seem, I did not share. I felt pleasure in the delight and animation that brightened and laughed in every countenance, and the land itself, the breaking up of the level line of the horizon, the dim blue hill, towards which every eye was strained, was, as if by sympathy, an object of interest to me; but the "home" which my shipmates were approaching I felt more distant from me than before. Every one was soon actively engaged in arranging his trunks and changing his ship dress for gayer apparel. One gentleman, who during the voyage had skipped about the deck in a smart frock, emerged from his cabin, to my great surprise, in the single breast and upright collar of a Quaker's drab suit. The afternoon was beautiful; the sun was setting in mild, subdued splendour as we neared the lighthouse. The black fish were tumbling about around the ship; the land gave distinctly, as we advanced, the colours of the soil and foliage. The pilot being taken on board, all crowded around him, as if he had been an admiral come to hoist his flag over us. He was an old Dutch skipper, and had a habit of spitting on his hands before every order he gave, as if the effort was a manual exertion. At his command the man was slung to heave the lead. The day was now fast closing, and the land lay in deep shadow around, from which a light looked out now and then from some house on the shore like a friend we had missed for many a day. The vessel moved beautifully through the sea; the sun went down, and in the deep obscurity of the twilight I could sit apart and meditate upon the various states of mind around me, and my own absence from my native land. The melodious cry of the seaman as he heaved the lead—"Quarter less nine—a ha' less seven"—so musical, so melancholy, increased the dejection I felt. I sat listening to his chant until we passed the Narrows, a channel which the meeting points of the shore reduced to about half-a-mile in breadth, and from which the bay spreads open in grandeur and beauty. The dancing lights of the city, which

multiplied as we approached, the steamboats, like fireworks on the waters, pouring from their chimneys streams of fiery sparks, the shouts and questionings as we passed the boats and shipping in the East River, made a scene, strange, picturesque, and interesting, and yet to us alone mournful.

CHAPTER XXI.

1826.—T. A. Emmett—First appearance in Virginius at the Park Theatre, New York—Society in New York—Visits to public buildings, &c.—The Falls of the Passaic—Moving houses—Conway acting in New York—Forrest—Boston—Baltimore—Charles Carroll—New Year customs in New York.

WHEN alongside of the quay, Captain Lang went up to the Park Place Hotel to bespeak rooms for us, and, strange as it may seem, I was glad when his messenger returned to say we could not be accommodated before the next day: my reluctance to go on shore was so great, and I seemed to hold on to the good ship, as if with the feeling that there was something of England still about it. The next morning a very neat carriage, that might have put to shame the hackney-coaches of London, came to take us to our new residence, a well-furnished and comfortable suite in an hotel looking on the park, an open space of some extent planted with trees, having the City Hall, the Park Theatre, and some good houses on the different sides of it. Simpson, the partner of Price, and manager of the Park Theatre, lost no time in calling on me, and urging the expediency of an early public appearance; it was settled for Monday, October the 2nd, in the character of Virginius. The objects I had in view in coming to the United States were not confined to the single one of making money. The government of the country, its society, the manners of its citizens, and its scenes of grandeur and beauty, so unlike what we had left behind in our own dear land, had claims on my curiosity and interest. I had besides resolved to spare no pains in the cultivation of my art, and from noticing in other actors, as in myself, the injurious effect of grasping at gain by playing every night in the week, leaving no time for meditation and

study, I laid it down as a rule to limit my performances to three or at most four nights in each week, and steadily to keep a watch on my improvement. It was my practice never to undervalue my audiences; and, though I often found them in America less sensitive and more phlegmatic than those at home, I wrestled with the tendency to yield to their apparent want of sympathy, and by acting determinedly to the character I had to represent, my hearers gradually kindled into excitement.

The mornings of my two first days were given to rehearsals of my plays. The afternoons were occupied with the delivery of my letters of introduction. One of these was of peculiar interest, addressed by Sheil to Thomas Addis Emmett, who after his participation in Irish rebellion now stood at the head of the New York bar. In our many acquaintances we found very ready and agreeable *cicerones*, eager to point out what was remarkable in the city and its institutions, for which a moderate share of admiration would have sounded dull and disappointing to American ears, as you are expected in this country to praise without stint; and it was a complaint of Basil Hall's, who arrived shortly after us, that his friends would not wait for his deliberate judgment, but exacted unqualified commendation for whatever they might draw his attention to. There was much to admire and interest in the novel scenes presented to us; but to note a description of the streets and buildings as they appeared to us in 1826, when the line of Broadway had its utmost limit in Canal Street, would be to give a picture that few now living would recognise, so extensive, so surprising have been its alterations and improvements.

On my appearance at the Park theatre, a spacious and handsome building, the house was crowded, and my reception all I could desire. The only occurrence to remind my wife and sister, who occupied a private box, that they were not in an English theatre was the rough treatment of a black woman, who by some mistake had got into the pit, and for a length of time was hustled about from one to another amidst shouts of laughter from the white spectators, until at last she got into a corner, and, nestling down there, was suffered to remain unmolested during the remainder of the evening. No coloured person was at that time allowed to sit

either in the boxes or pit. My performances being limited to the repetition of the characters in which I had gained reputation at home, gave occasion to little remark. The houses were nightly crowded, my emoluments were most satisfactory, and thus three weeks passed away agreeably enough. The hospitality of our many friends gave us ample opportunity of gaining intimate knowledge of the society of New York, dinners and evening-parties following in quick succession. Customs have much changed since then, but at the time of which I write a stranger going to a dinner-party would probably find the street door open, without a servant to answer either knocker or bell; or if one did come to open the door, he would leave the visitor to make his way, unheralded and unannounced, to the reception-room. I have more than once suffered great embarrassment in entering a room full of people whom I did not know, and have been recognised as a guest by the courtesy of host and hostess from being the only stranger present. The round of introduction that follows your recognition, and which you are then condemned to undergo, every individual shaking your hand, merely in conformity with his own notions of good-breeding, and not caring one pin for you, is something of an annoyance. But I found the entertainment almost always unexceptionable; their tables are usually arranged with good taste and elegance; freedom and cheerfulness give life to their conversation, which is generally interesting and amusing. The scarcity of servants is a common inconvenience, and where one is almost as much an incumbrance as a help one is not surprised that families dispense with all the hands, as in-door residents, not absolutely necessary. Coffee is introduced at the dinner-table, it not being customary to return to the drawing-room to partake it with the women (I am writing of the year 1826). When the ladies rise from table they vanish, "and no man sees them more." This is odious, and a remnant of barbarism that I am glad to say is losing part of its detestable character in the growing disuse of cigars with wine.

The indefatigable attention of our many friends did not allow my leisure days to be idle ones. They were diligently and agreeably employed in visiting whatever was worthy of notice in or about the city. The principal public building at that time

was the City Hall, in which the courts of justice were held. A trial of great interest, the State's prosecution of some bubble companies, gave occasion to Thomas Addis Emmett, who was retained in the defence, for a display of his powers, and it was with admiration and rapt delight I listened to the energetic accents of "the old man eloquent." On leaving the court we passed through the vaulted passages underneath. A solitary figure was slowly dragging his steps along, close to the wall: he was below the middle size, dressed in a light grey-coloured suit, which, with his pale complexion, gave him in his loneliness somewhat of a ghostly appearance. When we had passed him, one of my friends in a significant whisper asked me if I knew who that was. On my replying in the negative, he told me he was Colonel Birr, who shot Hamilton, the Secretary of State, and who had been under prosecution for high treason. He looked a mysterious shadow of unrepented evil. Once seen the vision was not one to be forgotten. The schools, of which Americans are justly proud, of course came under our inspection. In one of these the principal teacher ordered the boys to stand up, and made an American harangue to them which severely taxed our gravity. Pointing to us, the visitors, he emphatically charged them to remember that "the eyes of Europe were looking down upon them!"

An excursion was proposed to the Falls of Passaic, and a party was formed, consisting of the Wilkes's, and Coldens, Captain and Mrs. Basil Hall, and ourselves. Having to wait the ferry-boat's return to cross the Hudson, we employed the half-hour's delay in visiting the new streets at the rear of the Exchange, and in admiring the structure of that marble building. On our return, in passing down William Street, we were stopped by an apparatus of heavy framework of timber with large screws, laid across the street. Our inquiries were soon satisfied in learning that these preparations were for pushing from their original site, to a foundation built for their reception ten yards behind, two large brick houses. They had been moved part of the way along the soaped beams the previous night, and with so little agitation or disturbance, that a cup of milk on the dining-room chimney-piece of one did not spill a drop in its journey! The whole distance was completed in a few days, and the two houses were to be seen occupying a

different plot of ground from that on which they were first erected. Our wonder was not participated in by the citizens of New York, to whom a more extraordinary removal of a brick house some time before had familiarised the present experiment. That building was not only moved from the foundation on which it originally stood, but was actually let down upon another some feet below its original basement. Our road to the Passaic Falls lay beyond the Ferry of Paul's Hook, across some salt-marshes, clustered with irises and alive with fish, frogs, and terapins, and through a rich country beautified with orchards and the flowers of the tulip and locust trees. We slept at the town of Patterson, and on the morrow made an examination of the extraordinary geological phenomenon which gives such peculiar singularity to the falls of this river, but which a more scientific vocabulary than mine is required to depict and explain. It must suffice to say that we were amply repaid for our journey by the wonderfully curious fractures of the earth's crust which it presented to us, and the rushing of the broken stream through its various fissures.

A new theatre in the Bowery, a low quarter of the city, was opened during my sojourn in New York. It was handsome and commodious; but its locality was an objection insuperable to the fashion of the place. Messieurs Conway and Forrest were members of the *corps dramatique*, which was composed of some of the best actors in the country. I was very anxious for poor Conway's success in the States, holding him in great esteem as a thoroughly gentlemanly man, and entitled to credit for considerable talent. The part he acted on the night I saw him was Brutus, in 'Julius Cæsar.' The performance was even, perhaps too tame; unrelieved by any start of enthusiasm, and correctly described by that chilling word "respectable." Forrest was the Mark Antony. He was a very young man, not more, I believe, than one or two and twenty. The "Bowery lads," as they were termed, made great account of him, and he certainly was possessed of remarkable qualifications. His figure was good, though perhaps a little too heavy; his face might be considered handsome, his voice excellent; he was gifted with extraordinary strength of limb, to which he omitted no opportunity of giving prominence. He had received only the commonest education, but in his reading

of the text he showed the discernment and good sense of an intellect much upon a level with that of Conway; but he had more energy, and was altogether distinguished by powers that under proper direction might be productive of great effect. I saw him again in 'William Tell.' His performance was marked by vehemence and rude force that told upon his hearers; but of pathos in the affecting interview with his son there was not the slightest touch, and it was evident he had not rightly understood some passages in his text. My observation upon him was not hastily pronounced. My impression was that, possessed of natural requisites in no ordinary degree, he might, under careful discipline, confidently look forward to eminence in his profession. If he would give himself up to a severe study of his art, and improve himself by the practice he could obtain before the audiences of the principal theatres in Great Britain, those of Edinburgh, Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, &c., (then good dramatic schools), he might make himself a first-rate actor. But to such a course of self-denying training I was certain he never would submit, as its necessity would not be made apparent to him. The injudicious and ignorant flattery, and the factious applause of his supporters in low-priced theatres, would fill his purse, would blind him to his deficiency in taste and judgment, and satisfy his vanity, confirming his self-opinion of attained perfection. I spoke of him constantly as a young man of unquestionable promise, but I doubted his submission to the inexorable conditions for reaching excellence. The event has been as I anticipated. His robustious style gains applause in the coarse melodramas of 'Spartacus' and 'Metamora;' but the traits of character in Shakespeare, and the poetry of the legitimate drama are beyond his grasp. My forebodings were prophetic.

From New York, where I left my wife and sister in their comfortable hotel, my next engagement, which began on the 30th of October, led me to Boston, where upon the same terms, £50 per night, I represented the same plays, using my leisure days in making acquaintance with Bunker's, or rather Breed's Hill, Faneuil Hall, the Capitol, the Common, and the various institutions and sites that laid claim to my attention. The theatre was nightly crowded, and the boxes were let by auction at premiums exceeding $200. A traveller

would very often at that time hear complaints of the intractability and rudeness of Americans. My experience did not then justify me in admitting the correctness of the accusation. In New York, where I had frequently to make inquiries of passers-by, I observed that the courtesy with which they were answered was not surpassed by the *politesse* with which a stranger's appeals are usually responded to in the streets of Paris. A young Englishman with whom I was acquainted was never weary of inveighing against the coarseness and unaccommodating spirit of "the Yankees," which my own experience warranted me in discrediting. We drove together one morning in a cab to Salem, a pretty town about twelve miles from Boston, and were frequently under the necessity of applying to those we met, or to persons living on the roadside, for information, or assistance in regard to the harness or vehicle in which we were embarked. In every instance the readiest and most obliging answers were given, and the most efficient help afforded. On each several occasion I appealed to my fellow-traveller: "What will you say of that man?" "Oh, that one was civil enough!" The next? "Yes, he was very well." Another. "He was one of the better sort." Another, and another, to at least half a dozen cases, in which he finally reconciled himself to his persistency of depreciation by the general remark, "Ah, you have the luck to hit upon the good ones!" The simple fact being that civility meets with civility.

But I now find it necessary, if I am to make a record of my professional career, to limit myself to the bare facts of time and place, leaving any collateral remarks or descriptions to a possible future.

The success of this engagement induced the managers to secure me for its repetition in the ensuing March, and with most agreeable remembrances of the puritanical old city, which more intimate acquaintance only endeared to me, I set out on my journey to Baltimore, on my way joining company at New York with my wife and sister. Our residence at Baltimore was Barnum's Hotel, at that time distinguished in the States for its superiority in elegance and comfort to all others. My professional performances, commencing November 20th, were in the same plays in which I had acted at New York and

Boston; but very serious illness mulcted me of one-half of the nights on which I had calculated. We received attentions from many families, among the rest from that of Dr. Potter, my physician, a very skilful, intelligent, and agreeable man, who accompanied me in a visit which I paid, on his own particular invitation, to Charles Carroll, of Carrolltown, a man most interesting from his varied and extensive acquirements, and especially as being the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was a rare instance of extreme old age (being then in his ninetieth year) retaining all the vivacity and grace of youth with the polish of one educated in the school of Chesterfield. In my life's experience I have never met with a more finished gentleman. At his advanced age he kept up his acquaintance with the classics. He spoke of England with respect, and of his own country, its institutions, its prospects, and its dangers, with perfect freedom, anticipating its eventual greatness, if not marred by faction and the vice of intemperance in the use of ardent spirits, detaining me, not unwillingly, more than two hours in most attractive conversation. When at last I was obliged to take my leave, he rose, and to my entreaty that he would not attempt to follow me downstairs, he replied in the liveliest manner, "Oh, I shall never see you again, and so I will see the last of you!" He shook hands with me at the street door, and I bade a reluctant adieu to one of the noblest samples of manhood I had ever seen, or am ever likely to look upon.

But for my unlucky illness our visit to Baltimore would have been in all respects satisfactory. On the nights when I was able to act, the houses were well-filled; but my stay there could not be prolonged, as my engagements with Simpson, at New York, required my re-appearance at the Park Theatre on Monday, December 11th, 1826. Returning there, we took up our residence in the City Hotel. With ten nights' performances, at £50 per night, my professional labours for 1826 came to an end. The arrival of the New Year is welcomed in New York by a celebration of old date, but one that ought never to be suffered to grow into disuse, so sensible is its object, so genial and so Christian is its influence. On the 1st of January it is the custom for the ladies of each family to sit at home to receive visitors. It is unnecessary to say they are

not on such an occasion altogether indifferent to their toilets. The street door is left open, and refreshments are laid out in an inner room. Every gentleman of their acquaintance who may have a leg to stand on, or a carriage to ride in, presents himself in the course of the morning to shake hands and to wish his fair friends and their families a happy New Year. The whole city is alive and radiant with good-humour, smiles on every face, and the spirit of good-fellowship brightening every eye. The streets present a most animating sight, swarming as they do with well-dressed men hurrying in every direction in and out of the hospitable doors, snatching a hasty grip of hands from friends and acquaintances as they make their way through the moving crowd, and almost shouting as they pass the benediction of the day. In the utterance of this day's good wishes old friendships are confirmed, new ones are cemented, social slights and offences are condoned, misunderstandings are composed; where intercourse has been, from whatever cause, accident or shyness, suspended, this day, if taken advantage of, replaces all on an amicable footing. Many and great changes have taken place in New York since the day when I enjoyed this exciting and, as I felt it, this touching spectacle. My friend Mr. Wilkes did not expect me to sympathise with this outbreak of social feeling, but it quite carried me away. It was a demonstration that made one feel one's kindred with mankind, and I trust, if every other celebration in this country were to be discontinued, that this will last whilst there is a heart to kindle with enthusiasm at its Christian catholicity.

SELECTIONS FROM DIARIES.

SELECTIONS FROM DIARIES.

[THE autobiographical reminiscences (commenced in 1855) are not carried beyond the year 1826, but there remains a series of diaries affording Macready's own contemporary records of his daily life.

From 1827 to 1832 the diary was kept in small pocket-books, admitting only of a short daily entry. From 1833 and onwards, it was kept in books of larger size (Dunn's 8vo. Daily Remembrancer), with space for longer entries.]

1827.

[The entries for 1827 are very few, beginning only in September, and furnishing no account of the return from America, or of the occupations of the first eight months of the year.]

September 8th.—Leave Paris for Italy.

(Lyons—Avignon — Nismes — Marseilles— Nice— Genoa — Pisa—Florence—Bologna—Milan—and back.)

October 30th.—London.

November 6th.—House in Weymouth Street taken for six months, for £210, and carriage hired for same time for £16 16*s.*

November 12th.—Drury Lane begins. [Macbeth. First appearance for two years.]

Auxilium viresque et animi et corporis, O Deus omnipotens! mihi affer; laboris patientis, verique scrutatorem diligentissimum, præmia laudis me sumere precibus meis concede. Sine te enim impotentia robora, inutilis occasio, futile est hominis ingenium. Tutamen adsis mihi in æternum, O Deus, precor.*

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* Almighty God, give me help and strength of mind and body. Grant to my prayers the reward of praise, as a most assiduous disciple of patient labour, and of the truth. For, without thee, strength is weakness, opportunity is useless, and the understanding of man is a vain thing. Be thou my defence for ever, O God, is my prayer.—ED. TRANS.

[The cash account for 1827 shows a total income from all sources (including repayments of loans), of £3,285 5*s.* 11*d.* and a total expenditure (including investment) of £3,106 5*s.* 10*d.*]

1828.

January 1*st.*—Manchester.
——— 31*st.*—Bath (4 nights).
February 11*th.*—Bristol (5 nights).
——— 26*th.*—Harrogate.
March 5*th.*—Lynn (4 nights).
——— 18*th.*—Norwich (7 nights).
April 3*rd.*—Start for Paris.

[The English performances in Paris in 1828 took place in the (then existing) Salle Favart, and Macready had the support of Miss Smithson, who afterwards married M. Berlioz, the well-known musical composer, and of Mr. Webster and Mr. Abbott. Miss Smithson obtained a great success with the Parisian public. In 'Othello' the French critics made much laudatory remark upon the innovation introduced by Macready of withdrawing the actual murder of Desdemona from the sight of the audience, and letting it take place within the curtains of the alcove containing the bed.

The witches in 'Macbeth' excited laughter. In the scene of the cauldron an auditor exclaimed at the enumeration of the ingredients thrown into it: "Oh, mon Dieu! quel mélange!"

A burlesque of 'Virginius' was produced at the Théâtre des Variétés, in which Odry, a French actor of broad comedy, imitated Macready, dressed as a Roman centurion, but adding an English element to the costume, by wearing leather breeches and top-boots.

In a letter from Paris to his wife, of this date, Macready wrote: "I am considerably fatigued, as I play in earnest here and feel it for some days afterwards; but I am more than repaid in the sort of transport that seems excited among the literary and fashionable. I endeavour to procure every paper for you, that you may yourself judge of the degree and interest of the sensation."

The criticisms which Macready forwarded from Paris to his wife are well considered, thoughtful and appreciative, and show a real knowledge of English literature and art. The following extracts will give some idea of their value, and the last one supplies the account of an occasion when Macready was "recalled," contrary to the regulations of the French theatre.]

La Réunion. 18 *avril,* 1828.

"*Salle Favart — 'Virginius' — Tragédie en cinq actes, de Knowles.*—C'est à Macready que je m'attache : lui seul est l'âme de la pièce . . . Qui croirait que cet homme, à qui la nature a tout refusé—voix, port et physionomie—pût atteindre aussi haut que notre Talma, pour qui elle avait tout fait ? Ce prodige, qu'on raconte de Le Kain Macready le réalisait hier. Jamais acteur n'a plus complétement disparu pour faire place au personnage : jamais de plus terribles émotions ne se sont pressées sur le visage d'un homme, pour passer dans le cœur de ceux qui le regardaient ; l'illusion était complète, et devenait presque une souffrance. Expliquer de telles impressions qui l'essaierait ? C'est beaucoup de pouvoir les soutenir ; et j'avoue que pour moi, qui n'arrive pourtant pas tout neuf aux effets du théâtre, cet effort a fini par m'être entièrement impossible. On a honte de dire qu'on a sanglotté au spectacle ; cependant, quelques personnes m'ont avoué que leur émotion avait été poussée jusque-là ; et j'aime mieux mettre ici leur confidence que la mienne. On m'a dit que Miss Smithson a été admirable au moment de l'agonie dans la lutte de l'honneur contre l'amour de la vie : je n'en ai rien vu ; il y avait déjà quelques instants que je ne pouvais plus regarder."

* * * * * * *

L'Incorruptible. 19 *avril,* 1828.

"*Macready dans 'Virginius.'*—Ce tragédien n'excelle pas seulement dans un genre exclusif : presque égal à Talma dans les passages touchants et terribles, il se montre aussi beau que Lafont dans les mouvements chevaleresques. Il a fait verser des larmes dans la scène des fiançailles ; . . . je n'essaierai pas d'exprimer les affreuses émotions qu'on éprouve au moment

de la catastrophe. Macready abuse peut-être un peu de cet horrible situation: il tient trop longtemps le couteau suspendu sur le spectateur; on l'admirerait plus si l'on souffrait moins. . . . l'âme déchirée avait besoin de voir périr l'infâme Appius: Virginius en démence l'étrangle dans sa prison. Nous conseillons à quelque peintre d'aller voir Macready dans la dernière scène, lorsque, agenouillé près du cadavre d'Appius qu'il vient d'étouffer, les yeux fixés, la bouche béante, il semble frappé d'une épouvantable stupeur: ce tableau est de ceux qui ne sortent jamais de la mémoire."

* * * * * * *

Journal des Débats.

"*Othello.*—Le rôle d'Othello n'a pas été moins favorable hier à Macready que l'avaient été précédemment ceux de Virginius, de William Tell et d'Hamlet. L'annonce que cette représentation était la dernière dans laquelle nous verrions ce grand acteur avait rempli la salle, et Macready semble avoir voulu, en redoublant d'efforts et de talent, redoubler les regrets que son départ doit exciter. Sans établir de parallèle entre lui et les deux célèbres tragédiens anglais qui l'ont précédé dans le même rôle (Kean et Kemble), on a généralement remarqué que par des moyens différents Macready savoit arriver au même but, et devenir leur égal sans être leur imitateur. Non moins admirable dans les mouvements d'une douce sensibilité . . . . que dans les transports d'une jalousie effrénée et dans les excès de l'épouvantable vengeance qu'elle lui inspire, il a tour à tour attendri, ému, effrayé les spectateurs, et n'a point laissé à la réflexion le temps de s'arrêter aux inégalités bizarres qui défigurent l'un des chefs-d'œuvre de Shakespeare. Le triomphe de l'acteur a été complet, et après la pièce il a été redemandé avec des acclamations si franchement unanimes que l'on ne conçoit pas qu'on ait voulu s'opposer à un vœu aussi sincère et aussi innocent au règlement de police, qui par sa tyrannique absurdité devroit être considéré comme aboli avec le pouvoir d'où il tiroit son existence. Cependant Abbot s'est cru obligé de venir la rappeler au public, qui a trouvé un moyen très-plaisant de l'éluder, sans que M. le Commissaire de police pût s'en offenser ou se croire compromis. Un grand nombre de jeunes

gens se sont rendus au théâtre, et ont invité Macready à descéndre avec eux à l'orchestre des musiciens. A la vue de l'acteur, que son costume faisait facilement reconnaître, les bravos et les battements de main ont éclaté dans toutes les parties de la salle, et les amis qui entouraient Macready, interprétant les désirs du public, ont saisi Macready à bras-le-corps, et malgré une résistance modeste, l'ont porté sur l'avant-scène. C'est là qu'il a reçu de l'assemblée des adieux qui ont paru produire sur lui une vive impression."

[Macready's engagement in Paris on this occasion was for three weeks, at £100 a week.]

April 28*th.*—Drury Lane engagement.

May 23*rd.*—Last night at Drury Lane, and benefit.

[The receipts of this engagement of four weeks were £440.]

May 26*th.*—Birmingham.

June 9*th.*—Taunton.

—— 12*th.*—Bridgewater.

—— 23*rd.*—Second engagement at Paris.

[£100 a week for four weeks.]

July 24*th.*—London.

—— 28*th.*—Exeter (5 nights).

August 7*th.*—Swansea.

——— 11*th.*—Birmingham (1 fortnight).

September 8*th.*—Yarmouth (4 nights).

———— 15*th.*—Cambridge (1 week).

———— 29*th.*—Lincoln (3 nights).

October 6*th.*—Shrewsbury (3 nights).

——— 13*th.*—Liverpool (1 fortnight).

——— 27*th.*—Nottingham (5 nights).

[From Nottingham Macready wrote to his wife, who had been urging him to leave the stage, and discussing the place of their future residence: "Where to live?" "Will you go to Rotterdam, Seringapatam, Chippenham, any 'ham?' We young fellows roam about. Are we to return to Wales, or vegetate at Pinner?* Settle where you like. Wherever thou art will seem Erin to me!"]

* Macready was now residing at Pinner Wood, Middlesex, three miles beyond Harrow, and about fifteen miles distant from Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres.—Ed.

November 10*th.*—Bury St. Edmunds (4 nights).
——— 17*th.*—Sheffield (5 nights).
——— 24*th.*—Cardiff (4 nights).
December 1*st.*—Bristol (6 nights).
——— 9*th.*—Wolverhampton (3 nights).
——— 17*th.*—Colchester (4 nights).
——— 26*th.*—Ipswich (4 nights).

[Total receipt of year, £2,361 16*s.* 3*d.*
Expenditure, £1,953 4*s.* 10*d.*
The plays chiefly performed during the English provincial engagements in 1828 were, 'Othello,' 'Virginius,' 'Macbeth,' 'William Tell,' 'Hamlet.']

1829.

January 1*st.*—Ut bene merear de hominibus gestisque bonis favorem tuum adipiscar, O Deus omnipotens! precibus meis concede.†

January 5*th.*—Plymouth.
——— 19*th.*—Bath.
——— 22*nd*, *&c.* [Engagements at Bristol, Stratford, Warwick, Grantham, Pontefract, Halifax, Newcastle, Shields, Greenock, Kilmarnock.]

March 6*th.*—Belfast (6 nights).
——— 23*rd to April* 1*st.*—Worcester, Northampton, Stamford.

April 11*th.*—On this day my dear father died. May the God of Mercy give grace to his departed spirit, and receive him into his eternal peace.

April 18*th.*—Followed my dear father's body to his grave. O God, bless and receive him, and spare me further trials of such a nature. Amen.

April 19*th.*—Reached my dear, dear home. Praised and

† Almighty God, grant to my prayers, that I may deserve well of men, and by my good actions obtain thy favour.—Ed. Trans.

blessed be the name of God for all His mercies and goodness to me.

May 11*th.*—Bristol — close the theatre—[for his father's widow].

[No entries—time apparently spent at home.]

August 24*th.*—Swansea.

September 3*rd.*—Returned home.

October 6*th.*—Brighton (4 nights).

——— 12*th.*—Liverpool (6 nights).

——— 19*th.*—Birmingham (5 nights).

——— 28*th.*—Leicester.

November 16*th.*—Glasgow (6 nights).

——— 25*th.* — Edinburgh. Performing 'Virginius,' 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' 'William Tell,' 'Cymbeline,' 'Venice Preserved,' 'King John.'

[The year ends with a short Latin prayer of thanks and praise.

Total receipts for 1829, £2,265 10*s.* 2*d.*

Expenditure, £2,223 16*s.* 5*d.*]

1830.

[In the pocket-book for 1830, commences the practice, yearly continued, and with occasional additions, of copying certain sentences and maxims for the guidance of life, into the blank leaves at the beginning of the book. In the present book occur the following:]

O teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

The art of life consists very much in not suffering ourselves to be annoyed by trifles. The detail of an account is of little consequence, if the sum total is in our favour. A wise man will not stop to vex himself about petty items, but turns at once to the bottom of the page.

[There are also a couple of short prescriptions of laudanum

and antimonial wine for a cold; and of sal volatile as a lotion for a relaxed throat. A list of prompt books is copied, indicating the plays in which Macready was chiefly performing during the year: 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' 'Virginius,' 'Hamlet,' 'King John,' 'Coriolanus,' 'Henry VIII.,' 'William Tell,' 'Henry V.,' 'Werner,' 'Fatal Dowry,' 'Damon and Pythias,' 'Venice Preserved,' 'Revenge,' 'Julius Cæsar,' 'Cymbeline,' 'Rob Roy,' 'King Lear,' 'Jane Shore,' 'As You Like It.'

January 1*st.*— Anno ineunte, tibi, Deus, precor, tutamen, auxilium, solamenque semper mihi adsis! Revereri et amare te, O magne virtutis Spiritus! virtutemque, dum vivo, me colere, precibus meis concede. Amen.*

January 11*th.*—Portsmouth (4 nights).

——— 18*th.*—Bristol (1 week).

February 5*th.*—Bristol again (1 night).

——— 8*th.*—Bath.

——— 15*th.*—Manchester (5 nights).

——— 22*nd.*—Dublin.

——— 26*th.*—Sold my engagements at Dublin and Cork (altering the fortnight at Cork to Dublin), to Mr. Bunn for £600, to conclude on Saturday, April 3rd, to be paid £300, Saturday, March 13th, and the remaining £300 on April 13th.

April 2*nd.*—Gave up £100 to Mr. Bunn in consequence of the ill success of the engagement.

April 4*th.*—Saw my Catherine and Letitia sail for England.

—— 5*th.*—Belfast.—[Giant's Causeway, &c. visited.]

—— 8*th.*—Coleraine.

—— 17*th.*—Dublin.

—— 18*th.*—Sailed for England.

May 8*th.*—Hereford (4 nights).

—— 14*th.*—Ludlow (2 nights.)

—— 31*st.*—Birmingham (7 nights).

June 8*th, &c.*—Lichfield, Stourbridge, Ashby.

—— 24*th.*—Sponsalis dies meus. Beatum sit nomen Dei optimi, qui mihi tantam felicitatem præbuit permisitque.

* With the opening year, I pray thee, O God, be with me, ever my defence, my aid, and my comfort, and grant to my prayers that I may revere and love Thee, Great Spirit of goodness; and while I live that I may seek after goodness. Amen.—Ed. Trans.

Auctor virtutis, omnisque boni, in me meosque caritatem tuam ostendas perennem humiliter te oro! *

July 31*st.*—Entered into an engagement with Mr. A Lee, for three years at Drury Lane Theatre. £30 per week and half a clear benefit for the first season; £40 per week and half a clear benefit for the two following seasons.

August 4*th.*—Went to London. Saw Sir Thomas Lawrence's gallery.

August 14*th.*—Cork. Macbeth. Played it naturally and forcibly (8 nights).

August 30*th.*—Yarmouth (5 nights).

September 6*th.*—Margate (3 nights).

——— 24*th.*—Leicester.

——— 27*th.*—Scarborough.

October 4*th.*—Liverpool (1 week).

——— 11*th.*—Reached Elstree † from Birmingham: arrived at Elm Place. L. D.

October 13*th.*—Open at Drury Lane.

——— 14*th.*—Went to London to read 'Werner' to Mr. Morton.—Returned to Elm Place.

October 15*th.*—Saw Mr. Ainsworth on Arteveldt.

——— 16*th.*—Went to London. Rehearsed 'Virginius.'

November 15*th.*—Plymouth (5 nights).

——— 17*th.*—Dined with Macaulay.

——— 21*st.*—Arrived in London.

——— 15*th.*—Werner. Succeeded. L. D.

December 26*th.*—This morning it pleased Almighty God to bless me with the gift of a beloved daughter.‡

[The professional receipts of the year 1830, are entered separately, and show a total of £1,817 15*s.* 7*d.* for thirty-nine weeks' performances in the provinces and at Drury Lane.]

* My wedding day. Blessed be the name of God, who has given and permitted to me so much happiness. Author of excellence and of all good, I humbly beseech Thee to show Thy never-failing love to me and mine!—Ed. Trans.

† Macready was now living at Elm Place, Elstree, on the borders of Middlesex and Hertfordshire, three miles beyond Edgware, and about thirteen miles from the two great theatres.—Ed.

‡ Christina Letitia (Nina): died 24th February, 1850.—Ed.

1831.

[In the blank leaves at the commencement of the pocket-book for 1831, a passage from Cicero's 'Offices' (I. 25, 28) is added to the entries of the preceding year:]

Nihil laudabilius, nihil magno et præclaro viro dignius, placabilitate atque clementiâ . . . . Exercenda est etiam facilitas et altitudo animi . . . . ne, si irascamur aut intempestivè accedentibus aut impudenter rogantibus, in morositatem inutilem et odiosam incidamus.*

January 16*th.*—Catherine comes down to dinner. Laus gratiæque Deo!

January 24*th.*—'William Tell.' Called for by the audience. [And the same entry occurs on the 29th.]

January 31*st.*—Bristol. Bath (1 week).

February 27*th.*—Lodgings in Norton Street. Dine with Mr. Harley, 14, Upper Gower Street, six o'clock.

February 28*th.*—Saw Kean in Brutus.

March 2*nd.*—Breakfast with Fred. Reynolds. Met Bernal, Colonel Cradock, Lady Blessington, Comte and Comtesse D'Orsay.

March 14*th.*—Macbeth. Called for by the audience. L. D.

April 8*th.*—'Pledge.†' [New tragedy (performed 8 nights).]

—— 11*th.*—Talfourd, Birch, Cooper, and Knowles supped.

—— 23*rd.*—Sign Lease of Elm Place. Shakespeare's B.D.

—— 28*th.*—Alfred the Great‡ (15 nights).

* Nothing is more excellent, nothing more worthy of a noble and great man than forbearance and a placable disposition. We should also be mindful to observe a certain courtesy not uncombined with reserve, and to avoid anger at ill-timed visitors and impertinent requests; otherwise we incur the risk of falling into an habitual ill-humour as annoying as it is unprofitable.—Ed. Trans.

† The 'Pledge; or, Castilian Honour,' an adaptation from Victor Hugo's 'Hernani'—Macready's part was Don Leo.—Ed.

‡ By Sheridan Knowles.—Ed.

May 10*th.*—Sent excuse and donation (£5) to the Literary Fund.

May 11*th.*—Literary Fund Dinner—'Werner.'

—— 18*th.*—Sent advertisements for benefit. Sent bills for ditto.

May 24*th.*—'Virginius.' Called for by the audience. L. D.

—— 27*th.*—Benefit. Deus benigne adsis. 'Coriolanus,' 'Critic,' 'Blue Beard.' [The proceeds of the benefit appear to have been £176 2*s.*]

May 30*th.*—Dine with O'Hanlon* half-past 6 o'clock.

June 1*st.*—'Coriolanus.' Played better than first night. My friend Jackson died. Requiescat.

June 2*nd.*—'Jealous Wife.' Received a note from Captain Polhill offering £30 per week for next season.

June 7*th.*—Dine with Talfourd quarter-past six o'clock.

—— 9*th.*—Went to poor Jackson's funeral.

—— 13*th.*—Last night, Drury Lane.

—— 14*th.*—Mr. Lee's benefit.

July 1*st.*—Went to town. Dined with H. Smith.

—— 2*nd.*—Town. Dined with Bourne.

—— 3*rd.*—Came home.

—— 11*th.*—Insured my life for £2999.

August 4*th.*—Wrote to Edward. Came to town. Saw ancient masters.† Went to House of Commons. Dined H. Smith.

August 8*th.*—Swansea (4 nights).

—— 15*th.*—Leeds (6 nights).

—— 21*st.*—Came by coach to Manchester, and thence by railway to Liverpool *in less than an hour and a half.*

August 22*nd.*—Liverpool (6 nights).

September 10*th.*—Settled with Mr. Bunn an engagement with Captain Polhill for two years at Drury Lane Theatre, at £30 per week including Lent, with, at the same time, leave of absence during Lent and half a clear benefit. Benefit on Monday. Orders.

September 14*th.*—Mr. Knowles undertakes to do for me scenes in 'Maid's Tragedy' for half the profits.

* Hugh Marmaduke O'Hanlon, afterwards counsel to the Irish Office in London.—ED.

† The exhibition formerly held annually at the British Gallery, Pall Mall —on the site now occupied by the Marlborough Club.—ED.

[The following entry is one of several similar ones and shows how closely Macready attended to his farming affairs in the country:]

September 22*nd.*—*Vacca impregnata.*

——— 26*th.*—Shrewsbury (3 nights).

October 1*st.*—Drury Lane Theatre opens. Take lodgings, £1 5*s.* per week, 1*s.* each fire, for one month.

October 10*th.*—Walked to St. Alban's. Saw Abbey, St. Michael's, Lord Bacon's monument, Roman Wall, &c. Returned in chaise.

October 14*th.*—Saw Kean in 'Othello.'

——— 15*th.*—Read the 'Bridal' to Morton. Approved. Kean in Sir Edward Mortimer.

October 18*th.*—Signed an agreement with Captain Polhill. Went to Elstree.

October 20*th.*—Delivered MS. of 'Bridal' to the managers.

——— 29*th.*—Read the 'Bridal.' Middling effect.

November 10*th.*—'Bridal' rejected.

——— 28*th.*—Saw Young in 'Zanga.' Very good.

December 1*st.*—Agreed for Dublin. £300 secured for three weeks. Terms: clear thirds, Mondays and Saturdays; clear fourths, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Divide the benefit.

December 9*th.*—Came to town and returned to Elstree in the evening.

December 22*nd.*—Ellen's* half year due. Walked down to Elstree.

December 26*th.*—Filia mea amatissima nata est. Deus parens protege, dirige, et adjuva eam!† (Nina's birthday).

[The total of receipts from all sources in 1831, is entered at £2,026 2*s.* 1*d.*; of payments, at £2,367 11*s.* 5*d.*]

* Macready's sister, to whom he made a yearly allowance.—Ed.

† My dearest daughter born. May God protect, direct, and help her as a parent!—Ed. Trans.

1832.

[In the book of 1832, the following sentences appear for the first time:]

"The elevation of the mind ought to be the principal end of all our studies which if they do not in some measure effect, they are of very little service to us."

Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν.*

February 6*th.*—'Hamlet.' Played naturally and considerately.
——— 23*rd.*—My darling child walked alone. L. D.
——— 28*th.*—'Richard III.' Acted naturally and earnestly.
March 1*st.*—'Macbeth.' Played really well.
——— 5*th.*—Bath. Bristol (4 nights).
——— 12*th.*—Manchester (5 nights).
——— 19*th.*—Dublin (4 weeks).
April 3*rd.*—'Winter's Tale.' Acted indifferently. Violent and indiscriminative.
April 4*th.*—Dined with Colonel D'Aguilar.
——— 6*th.*—Dine with Captain Bolton. Invited by the 60th Rifles' mess.
April 7*th.*—'Werner.' Not acted well. Distressed by people round me.
April 10*th.*—'Virginius.' Bespeak of Garrison. My cold still very bad, and little expectation of losing it while here. Very low and unwell. Acted feebly but not altogether ineffectually. Very ill.
April 11*th.*—No play to-night in consequence of my health.
——— 12*th.*—'Macbeth.' Very unwell indeed. Much disinclined to act, but acted well—really well. Thought of an improvement in third act. Tenderness to Lady Macbeth. Physician came on too late, half undressed, holding his clothes!

* Strive ever to excel.—Ed.

April 13*th.*—'Pizarro.' Better, but not well. Acted with effect, and not altogether badly.

April 14*th.*—'Rob Roy.' Acted indifferently. Called for by audience, and spoke pretty well.

April 18*th.*—Travelled from Shrewsbury to St. Alban's in the *Wonder* coach. Reached my dear home at half-past eight. All well, thank the good God.

April 21*st.*—Went to London. Saw Bunn. Business. Took lodgings, 19 Argyll Street, at £2 12*s.* 6*d.* per week.

April 26*th.*—'Merchant of London.' * Play went very greatly.

—— 30*th.*—Farren's benefit. Home. Rabbits bought. Cough bad.

May 5*th.*—'Merchant of London.' Acted pretty well. Wretched house.

May 7*th.*—Late for coach. Stayed at Elstree. Day of idlesse and sunshine in the garden. Walked over to Edgware.

May 12*th.*—Dine at Garrick Club. Dinner to Lord Mulgrave. Very kindly noticed in his speech. Came away as they were about to drink my health. Not nerve for it.

May 14*th.*—Benefit. 'Winter's Tale.' 'Catherine and Petruchio.' Acted with tolerable spirit to the worst benefit house I ever played before in London: but thank God for all He gives.

May 15*th.*—Went home by *Crown Prince.* All well. Very much fatigued. Spent the day in the garden.

May 19*th.*—'Virginius.' Selected model of vase for Young. Acted coldly and ill. Played with naked arms.

May 21*st.*—Harley's benefit. 'Devil's Bridge.' Inscription for vase.

May 23*rd.*—'Werner.' Dined with H. Smith. Acted very well. Preserved an erect deportment in the midst of passion, and let the mind act.

May 24*th.*—Ordered boat. Laporte took Covent Garden Theatre. 'School for Scandal.' Acted pretty well. After play settled proceedings about Young's vase.

May 25*th.*—Last night. Gave inscription and names to Gass.

—— 28*th.*—Wrote speech. Garden boat arrived. Launched her.

May 29*th.*—Went to London. Rehearsed with Young,

* By Serle. Macready's part was Scroope.—ED.

Mathews, &c. Strange effect on entering Covent Garden Theatre first time nine years. Garrick Club. Dined with J. Birch.

May 30*th.*—Young's benefit and last night. Act for him,* 'Hamlet.' Well received by audience. Went into orchestra. Heard Young's farewell. Presented vase to him. Walked home with Cooper.

May 31*st.*—Dinner to Mr. Young by Garrick Club. Proposed Lord Clanricarde's health.

June 1*st.*—Rose an hour too soon. Went to King's Arms, Snowhill. *Crown Prince* full. Came by Hemel Hempstead coach. Very unwell, with bad headache as on the two previous days. Soothed and relieved by being at home. Thank God for my home!

June 2*nd.*—Rowed on the reservoir.

—— 9*th.*—Walked to Edgware to buy plants. Bees swarmed.

June 10*th.*—Talfourd, &c., to dine, and returned to town in the evening. Talfourd informed me of Young giving my health, and of his speech on the occasion.

June 13*th.*—Paid Gass for Young's vase. Lunched at Garrick Club. Saw Abbott, Bartley. Called on Young. Gave me two dresses.

June 15*th.*—Go to Rugby and Birmingham. At Dunstable, roasting oxen, &c., to celebrate Reform. Delight to see human happiness. Read 'Quarterly Review' of Mrs. Trollope. Slept at Hen and Chickens.

June 16*th.*—Went to Coventry. St. Mary's Hall. Costume of Henry VI. St. Michael's Church. Full suit of plated armour, Henry VII.—easy to imitate. Trinity Church. Curious fresco of Day of Judgment. Went to Rugby. Melancholy reflections on time misspent through ignorance of one's own capabilities. Twenty-three years since I left. Slept at S. Bucknill's.

June 17*th.*—Rugby so altered. Rural character quite gone. Saw Birch. At church, heard Moultrie and Page.

June 18*th.*—Breakfasted at Bucknill's. Posted to Daventry. *Crown Prince* coach to Elstree.

June 20*th.*—An idle day. Very much fatigued, owing to bad

* Macready played the Ghost for Young's benefit.—ED.

night through the dogs barking. Went to bed early. Finished '*L'Ingénu.*'

June 22*nd.*—Read in 'Childe Harold.' Cannot like the style or sentiment.

June 23*rd.*—Read 'King Lear.' Wordsworth on 'Imagination and Fancy,' also some of his poems. '*L'homme aux quarante écus.*' Very tempestuous day.

June 24*th.*—My wedding day.

—— 25*th.*—Went to London. Looked for lodgings for Catherine. Dined with Cooper. Went to the Haymarket. Saw Kean in 'Richard.' Pleased with his energy. Felt his want of abstraction in his soliloquies, and his occasional tricks.

June 26*th.*—Went to the exhibition. Wilkie's pictures. Mulready, Etty, Phillips Saw the Fleas; offensive and frivolous. Saw 'Robert le Diable.' Much pleased with the Nourrit* and Levasseur. A bad plan of amusement.

June 27*th.*—Called on Sheil. Not at home. Went to Committee of House of Commons. Examined.† Home by *Billing's.*

June 28*th.*—Cut hay. Went over garden and ground.

* Nourrit, the great tenor, for whom the opera was written.—Ed.

† Macready does not appear to have prepared any statement for the Committee, but simply answered the questions put to him. His evidence, as printed in the 'Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Dramatic Literature, 1832,' is not long, and it may be interesting to state shortly the opinions obtained from him. He thought that due effect could not be given to most of Shakespeare's plays in a small theatre, but wished Covent Garden and Drury Lane somewhat reduced in size. He considered it almost impossible to congregate an efficient company in any one small theatre; and that more theatres open would not make more good actors. He said there was not then the same quantity of dramatic talent in the provincial theatres as fifteen or twenty years previously, and believed the profession of an actor to be so unrequiting, that no person who had the power of doing anything better would, unless deluded into it, take it up. He would not allow the minor theatres to perform the legitimate drama, but would let them purchase new five-act plays, so as to extend the market to dramatic authors: but admitted that, during two years of his existing engagement at Drury Lane, 'Macbeth' had only been given six times, 'Richard' five times, and 'Hamlet' once. To moderate any expectation of a better supply of good actors to be promoted by the multiplication of theatres, he pointed out that in a nation so dramatic as France no great actor had appeared since the death of Talma. He attributed the decline of the drama partly to the greater diffusion of books and facilities for reading, and he was in favour of giving to dramatic authors the right to remuneration from all theatres performing their pieces; and this was in fact afterwards provided for by the Dramatic Authors' Copyright Act.—Ed.

Read a little of 'Hamlet.' Went on the water. Delightful day. Took tea in the summer-house. Read over 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Have much doubt of its effects. Read Wordsworth's 'Female Vagrant.'

June 29*th.*—All hay carted, looking well. Lovely summer day. Home looks and feels comfortable. L. D. Began copying 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Read very little of 'Lear.' Read over 'Maid's Tragedy.' Much pleased with it. Read with attention Alison 'On Taste.' Much gratified, though not always agreeing with his conclusions.

June 30*th.*—Gave James a notice to quit—one month. Resolved to do with one man-servant.

July 2*nd.*—Read 'Hamlet' and practised. Sold my old rick of hay, £3 10*s.* per load. Tried my bows in the field.

July 5*th.*—Wrote part of a letter to the Committee on Dramatic Literature, correcting evidence. Read and practised for two hours. Unpacked and deposited fourteen dozen wine.

July 7*th.*—Took exercise with quoits.

—— 17*th.*—Letter from Bunn and offer from Newcastle manager. Read 'Lear' for upwards of two hours. A day to picture summer by. Rowed on the water with dear Catherine. Tended my slips. Wrote 'Antony and Cleopatra.'

July 19*th.*—Went to Covent Garden. Saw Mars and Taglioni. Thought highly of Mars and as pleased as I could be with the grace of Taglioni.

July 24*th.*—Bathed. Gardened. Read Pope. Finished Voltaire's '*Princesse de Babylone.*'

July 25*th.*—Read, thought, and practised in my profession. The reported marriage of L——'s daughter, and the simultaneous recollection of an air, sung by a particular person in my younger days, led me into a long and serious meditation on the ends of my being. "*Perfectionner mon être*" ought to be my motto. Is it?

July 27*th.*—Began to read Juvenal. Tried to read the review of Mrs. Somerville's astronomical work. Found it too scientific to be intelligible to me.

July 28*th.*—Rose and bathed. Read and practised Hamlet and Lear three hours. Wrote 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Practised with the bow. Rowed on the water. Paid James's wages, who goes on Monday. Garden. Read Pope's 'Epilogue to the

Satires.' Read Homer, 'Antilochus slaying Melanippus.' Ajax's speech. Have not been very idle this week.

July 30*th.*—Read and practised Hamlet and Lear three and a half hours. In future must give more time to the exercise of my voice and the manner of my voice. A most lovely evening, the thin crescent of the moon above the soft orange tints in the west.

July 31*st.*—Two hours' theatrical studies. Read Livy's character of Hannibal and a portion of Johnson's 'Swift.'

August 2*nd.*—Rose, 5.30. Garden. Planted shoots. Read and practised three hours professional. Good. Read two books of Pope's 'Dunciad.' Dissatisfied with the coarseness and little spite of the work itself, and with the descent of so great a man to such a revenge. Bed, ten minutes past 11.

August 4*th.*—Continued 'Burke on the Sublime.' Conjectural, fanciful, and unconvincing.

August 7*th.*—Birth of a son.

——— 8*th.*—An idle day, which in duty to myself and my dear children must not be.

August 13*th.*—Finished Second Satire of Juvenal. A lash of spikes.

August 20*th.*—Go to London. Read Tasso on journey to town. Hair cut. Ordered wig for Lear. British Gallery, gratified. Walked with Planché to panorama of Milan. Went to Haymarket to see the 'Hunchback'—a beautiful play, very indifferently acted.

August 21*st.*—Dulwich Gallery. Wrote criticism on the 'Hunchback.'

August 23*rd.*—To Crayford. Bourne absent—left note and followed him. Saw again Wilson's splendid transparent-like picture—bathers and tower reflected in the stream, &c. A pleasant day; returned in chaise to town.

August 28*th.*—Finished writing out the MS. of 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Finished arrangement of 'Lear.' O'Hanlon called.

August 30*th.*—Rowed for some time on the water. Rainy and stormy.

August 31*st.*—To London. Went to Bedlam. Kept waiting half an hour. Nerves not able to bear it; came away. Bought dressing-box for Lotty. Clock for kitchen.

September 3*rd.*—Brewster sent a wig for Lear.

September 4*th.*—Mr. Chalk churched my dearest Catherine, and named my dearest infant, William Charles.* May God protect and bless him. Read Juvenal, Hudibras, Nardini's 'Roma Antica.'

September 7*th.*—Looked through 'Hamlet.' Read some of Barry Cornwall's poems.

September 12*th.*—Lord Grimston and friend to canvass. Promised not to vote against him, but refused to vote for him. Mr. Alston and friends called. Vote declined.

September 18*th.*—Read Harris's 'Hermes.' Much pleased with it.

September 20*th.*—Theatre. Settled plays, &c. Gave in 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Called on H. Smith. Met Cooper, Harley.

September 22*nd.*—Drury Lane opens. Quod felix faustumque mihi sit.

September 23*rd.*—Went to church in the afternoon. Packed up property box. Arranged and settled papers for my departure.

September 24*th.*—To town. Theatre at two.

———— 25*th.*—Newspapers. Read of Walter Scott's death on Friday last. Whatever his defects, a very great man, whose loss brings sorrow with it. χαῖρε, μεγάλη ψύχη!† Walked with Mr. Cooper to my chambers, 61, Lincoln's Inn Fields. Signed agreement, 2*l.* 5*s.* per week. Came home by Reeves' coach outside. Ordered rick to be cut. Walked over garden.

September 28*th.*—Rehearsed 'Pizarro.' News of robbery of geese at Elstree. Dined on sausage, brown bread, and soda-water. Lay down on bed. Acted middlingly. Very much cut in the arms.

September 30*th.*—Read Colberg.‡ Discovered that my room has echoes.

October 1*st.*—Breakfasted at Garrick Club. Colberg. Acted partially well. Mr. Bunn gave out.

October 2*nd.*—Newspapers, middling, middling. They persecute me. Why should I regard them? Acted indifferently—Wallace, O'Hanlon, Talfourd came to my room.

* Afterwards in the Ceylon Civil Service. Died November 26th, 1871, at Puttalam, Ceylon, and was buried at Kandy.—Ed.

† Farewell! great spirit!—Ed. Trans.

‡ In Serle's play, called, 'The House of Colberg.'—Ed.

October 3*rd.*—Left chambers. Came to Elstree by *Crown Prince.* Moored my boat in deep water to secure it from the ruffians of the neighbourhood.

October 4*th.*—Listened to Mr. P——'s play. Looked at him attentively as he read, considering what is genius; what, vice; what, virtue?

October 9*th.*—Read Mr. Oakley the whole afternoon. Played it a little better than before.

October 10*th.*—Read over 'Rolla.' Slept. Acted, not well—not collected—not taking time and very stiff. Why do I not break myself of this horrid habit?

October 13*th.*—Dined at Garrick. Saw Fladgate, Calcraft, Finch, &c. Saw Miss A. Smithson, who made offers for Paris. Answered Pocock, declining a "Scott" character. 'Rob Roy.' Acted tolerably well, and well received. The procession a most stupid business; carried through by the feeling of the audience.

October 15*th.*—'Macbeth.'—Acted, how? took pains and tried to be earnest, but the audience was dull. Was it not my fault? I am inclined to think, partially, yes. But it was a *pageant** audience. I roused them at last.

October 17*th.*—Came by *Crown Prince* to Elstree. Meditated on the nature and end of life. On the beauty and vivifying qualities of the physical world. Who dares say it is not undesigned or unsustained; looked over the fences, &c., of the fields, and gave directions about farm, &c. Read some of Wycherley's plays—coarse and obscene.

November 26*th.*—Read Iago in bed. Rehearsed Iago. Met Kean. Lay down on bed. Acted, not satisfactorily, nervous. Called by the audience. Bourne, Braham, and others came to congratulate me.†

November 27*th.*—Looked at Iago. Played well. Chaise to Elstree.

November 28*th.*—Pleasant and grateful day of relaxation.

* A procession of the dramatic characters in Scott's novels, was introduced upon the stage in honour of the great author, recently deceased, and is alluded to on 13th October, above.—Ed.

† On this occasion Kean and Macready acted together for the first time. They had been announced to alternate the parts of Othello and Iago, but did not in fact do so. Kean played Othello only, and Macready played Iago only during their joint performances.—Ed.

November 29*th.*—Acted Iago better than first night. Called for by audience.

November 30*th.*—Rehearsed Hotspur. Wrote to Marianne Skerrett. Letter from Horace Twiss. 'William Tell.' Acted my best.

December 1*st.*—Acted Hotspur. Hissed by a *Wolf,** as I suspect, in my first speech. Played with much spirit at the end. Supped with Wallace at Piazza.

December 2*nd.*—Dined with Harley, 6 o'clock, Bannister, Cartwright, C. Mathews, Hill, Laporte, &c.

December 3*rd.*—Went to see carriage at Houlditch's. Garrick Club. Theatre. Rehearsed; not well. Went home. Read Iago. Not well. Played *well* and *ill.* With more self-possession, but less finish and ease. Home to Elstree.

October 21*st.*—Read Mr. Oakley.

November 1*st.*—Rehearsed 'School for Scandal.' Joseph Surface and Kitely. Acted pretty well. Came home to tea. Introduced to Captain Marryatt.

November 6*th.*—Heard that I had been announced two days for Iago. Angry: foolishly so.

November 10*th.*—Lost much time and thought in useless, vain, and bad imaginations referring to people indifferent to me, not turning my eyes to the good I possess, but lashing myself into a state of irritation which, if it were wise or just to despise anything in humanity, should awaken my contempt. Let me be wiser, O God!

November 12*th.*—Saw two acts of Kean's 'Hamlet.' Imperfect, spiritless, uncharacteristic recitation.

November 15*th.*—Read Iago. Bought toys for children. Dined at Garrick Club. Kitely. Acted very well.

November 22*nd.*—Rehearsed Iago. Very nervous, in extremely low spirits. Came home. Thought over Iago, a very unhappy state of mind. Little beyond my home to comfort me—but much there.

November 24*th.*—Went to town by *Billing's.* Rehearsed Iago in saloon.

* The "Wolves" was the name given to a club, or supposed club, composed of Kean's supporters and admirers, as already mentioned in the 'Reminiscences.'—Ed.

December 10*th.*—Iago. Acted well when Kean did not interfere with me. Called for by the audience.

December 11*th.*—Acted, or rather repeated, the common-places of poor Don Trueban,* for whom I felt great sorrow.

December 12*th.*—Wrote to the City of London Literary and Scientific Institution declining to lecture.

December 15*th.*—'Men of Pleasure.' Acted very tamely.

December 19*th.*—Rolla. Acted tolerably, considering I had no previous thought upon it.

December 23*rd.*—Talfourd, Serle, Fred. Reynolds, &c., at Elstree. Went to St. Alban's in carriage. Spent a pleasant holiday, but omitted prayers in the evening—wrong.

December 24*th.*—Talfourd and I went up by coach. Party went in carriage to town.

December 27*th.*—New cow bought. (Cost £13.)

———— 28*th.*—Read over Iago. Acted very well. Kean quite strong on his legs and in his voice. Called for by the audience and much applauded. L. D. Returned to Elstree in carriage.

December 31*st.*—'Jane Shore'—Acted indifferently from want of previous study.

[The total receipts of the year 1832 passing through Messrs. Ransom and Co.'s books appear to have been £1,680 1*s.* 9*d.*; and the expenditure, £1,423 3*s.* 5*d.*]

1833.

Elstree, January 1*st.*—With God's merciful help I trust to make my conduct and use of time during this year more acceptable in His sight than that of my previous life has been; and I enter upon it with prayers for His blessings on my children, my wife, friends, and myself. Amen.

January 2*nd.*—My performance this evening of Macbeth, afforded me a striking evidence of the necessity there is for

* A contemporary criticism states that "The Drury Lane management gave a specimen of their short-sighted judgment by an attempt to revive that senseless production of Don Trueban, called 'Men of Pleasure.' Its production was an insult to the audience, and the piece was condemned at once." Macready's part was Lord Bellenden.—Ed.

thinking over my characters previous to playing, and establishing by practice, if necessary, the particular modes of each scene and important passage. I acted with much energy, but could not (as I sometimes can, when holding the audience in wrapt attention) listen to my own voice, and feel the truth of its tones. It was crude and uncertain, though spirited and earnest; but much thought is yet required to give an even energy and finished style to all the great scenes of the play, except, perhaps, the last, which is among the best things I am capable of. Knowles is ravished with his own acting, and the supposed success it has met with. I wish I was with mine.

January 3rd.—Went home to breakfast. Spent an idle but, in all other respects, a happy day. A well-spent day is pleasing while it lasts, and pleasant to remember when for ever gone; a day of mere pleasure is agreeable in its passage, but regret attends its close in the reflection that time which God has given for employment has been squandered or lost in idleness. Compunction is injurious, if unproductive of improvement. Let my revision of this day enable me to be more resolute in my resistance of future temptations, and teach me, for my own and my children's good, the necessity of blending activity with enjoyment. In my absence from home I am sometimes inclined to question the prudence of living so far from town; but when on reaching home I taste the fresh air of the country, look over its extent of prospect, feel in a manner the free range of thought and sense through the expanse of earth and sky surrounding me, I confess to myself, in the delightful sensations I experience, that such enjoyment is worth some sacrifice.

January 4th.—My acting to-night was coarse and crude—no identification of myself with the scene, and, what increased my chagrin on the subject, some persons in the pit gave frequent vent to indulgent and misplaced admiration. The consciousness of unmerited applause makes it quite painful and even humiliating to me. I thought this day of taking the Bath and Bristol theatres: it will probably go no further.

January 5th.—I have made a proposal to take the Bath and Bristol theatres for a short season during Lent. I hope my vanity, or sanguine desire of gain, has not misled me in my anticipations and dependences. I wish to procure an independence for my dear children, and I think this speculation likely

to be productive of good in itself, and to offer me a certainty of remoter benefit.

I have had some doubts as to the sum in which I should subscribe to Mrs. Jackson's print: but I have decided upon the larger, which is still much less than I wish to give. I know that I expose myself to the charge of imprudence and extravagance, but am I to endeavour to feed the widow and the orphan literally with the crumbs that fall from my table? I cannot so interpret the text of that Teacher, Whose name be blessed by all who have hearts to feel the love He taught.

London, January 8th.—Paid some visits of ceremony—unmeaning hollow practices, irksome and embarrassing in act and productive of no good result. I allude entirely to the G——s, who are incomprehensible to me: if they like me, why do they not cultivate my society; if they are indifferent, why not relinquish my acquaintance? "What art thou, thou idol, ceremony?" Why is it that my spirits, rather depressed before, rose when I saw an expression of discontent on the face of Mrs. —— at the retired life she led? Is it an evil feeling? I think not—or that principle of our nature that makes all human happiness comparative.

January 9th.—In attending the book-club last night, I was furnished with another instance of that silly and unamiable ambition so common in men, particularly little men, of directing and legislating for others. Observation of the errors of others is wise or uncharitable according to its result—either as it affords us a practical lesson or a subject to descant upon. This morning I rose betimes, and rode outside to Elstree. I felt pleasure in this little instance of economy both in time and money. A beautiful morning and, though misty afterwards, giving me the opportunity of a delightful walk with my wife and sister. In the afternoon I read much of Frederick II.'s life: an evidence of selfish vanity abusing great abilities, and brutal subserviency in the men who tolerated his dominion over them.

January 11th.—Little to comment on to-day beyond my own loss of it. Rose late, and omitted dinner, in order to have my powers more at command during my performance, which was certainly better for my abstinence. I find the good effect of that natural manly tone of dialogue, with which I must

endeavour to improve the colloquial ground-work of my acting. This evening I left at the theatre for the managers a tragedy by a Mr. Heraud, a dramatic poet, in his own confident opinion, secure of success; perhaps misled by the injudicious recommendation of Mr. Southey which led him to experiment in tragic composition. Such advice leads me to a reluctant doubt of the Laureate's sincerity, for it is scarcely possible in this case to suppose defect of judgment. Can that be called good-nature which shrinks from inflicting a slight *pique* to the *amour-propre* of a friend, with intent to cure his mind of a dangerous and still strengthening delusion? it is selfishness, worldliness—anything I think but justice or kindness, yet how universally practised!

Elstree, January 12th.—My thoughts wandering on idle, vain, unprofitable subjects; and only occasionally resting on the important consideration of economy in my expenditure for the sake of my dear children. Resumed my consideration of Othello, to which my mind must be given up. Visited by a lady (who mistook me for a relation of Mr. Macready), a writer of seven tragedies and various farces: this is one of the many who waste life and paper in their hopeless mockery of employment. Happy to return home; began with great delight Lardner's volume on mechanics.

January 14th.—This day I had marked down as one of active employment; began the morning with late rising and lost what was left of it between indolent indecision, perplexity at the little progress made in accumulating surplus, and considerations of means to economise more effectually in our general expenses. I look at my own age, the uncertainty of my professional income, my dear children, and I come to the resolution that, for my own continued happiness, it is essential money should be put by to insure a provision for them. May the blessing of God confirm my good intentions, and prosper my endeavours.

January 15th.—Finished Lord Dover's 'Life of Frederick II.'—a book of extracts from the various amusing memoirs of that king's contemporaries—a compilation, whose only merit is that of bringing together scattered anecdotes of that ill-named, heartless man, offering no glimpse of rational elucidation of such points of character as have perplexed inquirers, and never

attempting to penetrate beyond the surfaces of such men and things as the narration brings under his notice. Such treatment of a character so fertile in lessons of political and moral science to the keen observer or the contemplative philosopher, exhibits the author as a mere gossip without any pretensions to the title of historian.

London, January 22nd.—Not altogether so dissatisfied with the labour of to-day, though I might have done my duty better by rising earlier. My walk to London was real enjoyment from the beauty of the day; my thoughts, too, were not idle, for I went through several scenes of 'Othello.' Taking into consideration the employment of my time in the study of that character, the benefit of the air and exercise, and the money saved in my walk, I cannot set down the three hours and a half it cost me as misused or laid out to waste.

I acted to night with spirit and in a manly tone, better, perhaps, than ordinarily in the part, Rob Roy. A curious evidence of egotism, and importunate demand of attention to business of no concern to me, was afforded me to night in Mr. Heraud's letter. The universe is but an atom before the vastness of one's self!

January 23rd.—Although I cannot boast a victory over my lazy habits in the morning, the day has not been an idle one: indeed too active in reference to its principal object—principal as respects my means of life, of educating and providing for my children—viz., my performance, which I may here observe was "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," a lack of energy, of heartedness, with more than enough of muscular exertion, and all attempts at effect in expression overclouded by the perpetual scowl that contracted and darkened my countenance: a bad performance. Again I reproach myself with exhibiting that *odiosam et inutilem morositatem* against which I am so anxious to guard myself: in the instances both of a proposed election to the Garrick Club, and of the performers' incorrectness in 'William Tell.' Could I sober or improve the latter? Whom but myself could I affect by such moroseness? Why cannot I act upon my "own gained knowledge?" In the other case both person and thing were equally beneath me: why should not a person like Mr. F. belong to such a society? Why cannot I hold my peace and stay away? Such should be my course; I dread

the effects of my own intolerant and impetuous temper. God be my friend, for I am too often an enemy to myself!

January 24th.—In turning over the leaves of Johnson's Dryden, I find this remark, "He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure." Is not this a key to the causes of my own disquietudes? And should not I add to my happiness if I would think more of enjoying or employing, for, well done, it is synonymous, the present hour without reference to what is irremediable or apprehension of what is uncertain? I have done one act of duty, I hope, to-day, in sending money for G——'s board and clothes with letters to him and Dr. Woodroff; it will be a "brand from the burning" if he turns out well. W. Birch walked out with me; I was much struck with the scene of the canal and the skaters in the Regent's Park: the kind of indian-ink landscape that the colourless view presented, and the gaiety extorted from the vigour of winter, amused my thoughts. Rather exceeded in my lonely dinner and wine, as much from the ill effects of the two days' previous abstinence as from anything else; this kept me gazing on a star and speculating on the purposes of our being when I should have been better at rest.

January 25th.—In discussing the propriety of Mr. ——'s admission to the Garrick Club this morning, I so far improved upon my late violence of language as to refrain from any exhibition of temper: a very negative praise. Quite made up my mind to leave the managers to their own course in the particular of their pledge to me on the alteration of Othello and Iago. Why did I feel excited, and stung into a kind of nervous alacrity by Kean's inability to act? Our interest in this profession came too frequently into collision to insure, without steady vigilance, that magnanimity which makes the peace of conscience.

Elstree, January 26th.—Rose betimes, and set out fresh from my bath with elastic spirits and happy thankfulness of heart to walk to Elstree. Checked in my course by the thaw and rain, I rode about five miles of the road. The fresh air of the country is an enjoyment to me. Employed my day in examining Colonel D'Aguilar's translation of 'Fiesco,' settling my accounts, making up arrears of entries, &c. Felt the happiness of my home in seeing the health and comfort of my

family around me. If men could but unlearn the lessons of vanity which are taught by dictation, example, and the influence of current events to their youth, how truly happy could they make themselves by industry and charity. But to be certain of our own good, we calculate our neighbours' possessions or expenses instead of inquiring of our own wants, and are only contented by that vain and envious standard of comparison. Is not health, an income beyond my necessities, a beloved family, a quick imagination, considerable acquirements, and the knowledge of the value of these blessings, enough to enforce content and inspire gratitude?

January 29th.—Am compelled to blame severely in myself that want of decision and independent resolution, which should give birth to action without respect to the occurrences of the hour. The lamps of the wise virgins were dressed against the coming of their Lord, while the fools began to prepare them when their light was needed. Read over scenes of 'Othello,' but did not discharge my duty by it. Arranged in my mind the alterations to be suggested in Colonel D'Aguilar's 'Fiesco.'

Although often opposed to the critical opinions of Scott, I have pleasure in noting down the liberality and justice of his observations on Le Sage and, in nearly an equal degree, on Fielding. His description of the various effects produced on our minds by different portions of the novel of 'Gil Blas' as we advance from childhood through youth to manhood, shows him to be a close observer and a faithful reporter of his own emotions. Read Dryden's 'Cleomenes,' a play that has all the marks of a decaying intellect upon it. Images are forced most ungracefully upon the dialogue, and the portfolio of the author appears to have rendered up its last stock of common-places and incongruous similes. The frequency of coarse and vulgar expressions (perhaps meant as characteristic of Spartan conversation) excites the surprise of those who are acquainted with the usually happy selection of his words. The play possesses no one passage worthy of him.

January 30th.—Was awake at a very early hour by the sickness of my beloved child. With what anxious fondness one watches the change of every shade in the complexion of these precious gifts of Heaven! and how every day adds to the love with which we regard them! My hours of occupation

were divided between a letter to Colonel D'Aguilar, and reading some critical treatises by Dryden. S. and G. Bucknill arrived to dinner. They are gentlemanly and natural boys. Feel my mind fettered by the state of suspense in which it is held in regard to Othello. Must give my attention to the performance of it.

January 31*st.*—Had the delight of seeing my darling child smiling upon me with her usual health and spirits, when I awoke this morning. My heart turns in gratitude to the Giver of these blessings for the comfort it enjoys in their continued health. To-day I had experience of the truth that much of the difficulty of every task lies in our own disinclination to labour, and in the magnifying effect of our own apprehension. I read over some part of Othello to-day, which loses its awful appearance as it is more confidently approached. I entered some memoranda from Dryden's critical and dedicating epistles in my common place-book.

February 1*st.*—"Minute change in principles leads to mighty change in effects." A deduction of Harris in his 'Hermes' bearing analogy to the immense, not to say infinite, distance caused between two lines by the slightest divergence from their parallel. Employed the morning left to me by Kean's illness in reading two chapters of Harris's 'Hermes,' and some pages of Dryden's 'Critical Essays.' Took a walk of two hours, during which I returned the call, or card, of Mrs. ——. From the slovenly appearance of neglect I do not wish to improve the acquaintance. Continued Dryden's 'Essay' after my walk, which amused me in the facts it affords me for a history of the variation of critical opinion. From Harris's work much matter for thought is to be obtained, and very close reasoning to be followed in the analysis of universal language.

February 2*nd.*—I finished Dryden's 'Defence of Dramatic Poetry,' which he has conducted more in the spirit of a disciple of a theory than as an indifferent lover of truth. Took some exercise on the water, which was too rough for pleasure when out of practice. Began Gray's works, in which I have particularly noted the conceited and egotistical delivery of common-place by Mason. Pleased with the earnest tone of Algarotti's letter on Gray's odes, though not more influenced by his opinions than by Dryden's.

Sunday, February 3rd.—Brought me several letters on business; the answers to some of them, attendance at church, and a walk round the reservoir occupied all of my morning that was not given to the newspapers and playing with my children. There is some uncertainty on the arrangements of the next fortnight, but my resolution is taken to do the best I can under whatever disposition of things, and, trusting in Providence, to commit results to *its* will. Finished the remaining answers to my letters, and read over a few pages of Gibbon, which, with two or three chapters in the Greek Testament, has made up my study to day.

February 5th.—Was on the point of getting up at an early hour this morning, but lay to revolve and mention the outline of a plan which had occurred to me for taking the Drury Lane Theatre. I doubt the cohesiveness of the materials which it would be necessary to combine for the purpose. Enjoyed a most delightful walk through the beautiful country lying between this place and Mill Hill. Saw W —— there (while S. and G. Bucknill lunched at the inn), and talked over his affairs; found him as resolute in choosing his mode of extrication, although by others' means, as if he were the active person. Is this right? He has incurred a penalty and refuses to undergo it. Is this pride or wisdom? It is his second offence against prudence attended with burdens of self-reproach, if he thinks at all. I think him wrong in incurring the necessity of humiliation, and still more so in shrinking from it. Were I so situated, I would stoically encounter privation and the pain of wounded pride to demonstrate by actions a lofty principle.

February 6th.—Read Harris's 'Hermes,' which continues to please and instruct me. A dedication by Dryden to the Earl of Orrery is a repetition, almost verbal, of his defence of rhyme in dramatic poetry from his essay on that subject. The prologue is smooth and smart; but the play of the 'Rival Ladies' is not worth the time and trouble of perusal. Byron's letter on *Pope v. Bowles* is an ample vindication of the poet's fame from an aspersion that few would read, and none who could judge would yield to. He makes a clear case of what was manifest before.

February 7th.—Had the pleasure of being in the garden before

breakfast to overlook my servant's labours. After some short letters on business, I gave my attention to my professional studies, in which the greater part of the morning was spent. Employed three hours of a beautiful afternoon in exercise upon the water, where I more particularly enjoy the freshness, the quiet, and beauty of the country. Read Dryden's tragedy of the 'Indian Queen,' which, besides the merit of versification, frequently melodious and almost always easy, has nothing to recommend it. The language is as uncharacteristic as the persons are out of nature, or as the plot is impossible—improbable would be complimentary. Fielding has parodied some parts in his 'Tom Thumb.' It is a play of rhyming repartee and quixotic sentiment that wearies the reader in his search for those gems of thought and expression, which are sometimes to be found among the rubbish which Dryden has heaped together so hastily and inconsiderately.

February 8th.—It is a strange weakness, whether imputable to some physical cause or to an insuperable distrust of myself, I know not, that, on arriving in town to play a part often done before, as Iago, I should feel a trepidation and sudden sinking of heart as I got sight of the bill announcing my performance. But it is so, and though my reason soon subdues the emotion, I go to the theatre with as much restlessness and more uncertainty than many untried and less favoured actors know. To night, however, it did not affect my energy or skill; perhaps I have not played Iago with more entire self-possession, more spirit, and in a more manly unembarrassed tone. I fear poor W——'s fate is sealed! He is far beyond my reach, even if I had not stretched out a hand to him before; his present prospects do not warrant a further subtraction from my earnings. His want of forethought and calculation has been deplorable. Franklin says "if you want to know the value of money try to borrow it," this should have taught poor W—— worldly wisdom. It is one of the first steps towards wisdom to judge of others' actions, especially as they affect ourselves, as a third person. This would prevent much of that unjustifiable spleen and chafing of spirit with which we see our peculiar interest treated by them as secondary to their own.

February 12th.—How sensibly I feel the pleasures and comforts of my home as the day of my departure from it approaches.

I have read little to-day. Made an effort to conform in my opinion to Dryden's on the surpassing excellence of Ben Jonson's comedy of the 'Silent Woman,' but was wearied in the second act. Read a few of Wordsworth's 'Sonnets on the Duddon,' abounding in pictures for thought to dwell upon and moral truths that tend to direct or confirm the mind. Walked out with my dear Catherine and met our little Christina singing lustily along the road. Received letters in the evening, the answers to which engrossed what remained of the day.

London, February 14th.—A very busy day after a very disturbed night. My spirits became depressed after taking leave and losing sight of my dear wife and children, but the active employment of to-day at chambers and abroad has dissipated the gloom which hung upon me. I found myself announced for "the ensuing week" in the bills, but Mr. Bunn said it "meant nothing." My divinings were just!—In writing to W—— I have adhered to my resolution of advancing nothing without security. I am right. His failings are not misfortunes, or I would distress myself, as I have done, to relieve him.

Exeter, February 16th.—My morning was cut into as many portions as I had boxes, bags, notes, messages, and hundreds of *et ceteras*. I gave too much to the porter at the coach: this is a very silly fault, and a wrong to any poor creature that may need one's charity. There was nothing remarkable in the three passengers with whom I started; the woman was very vulgar, which was not her fault; her husband, an outsider, was equally so and rather drunk, but redeemingly civil. I passed Edwarde's Place (Kensington), and marked the house where I left my dearest Catherine nine years ago; never shall I forget my feelings in quitting her. I looked with extreme interest too at the inn at Hounslow where we breakfasted and changed our clothes on the morning of our marriage. Few have more cause to bless that important day than I.

Sunday, February 17th.—I read Racine's two prefaces to his 'Britannicus,' one of which is a repetition of the substance of the other, purged of the pettish smartnesses which, in the jealous temper and sometimes in the very expressions of Dryden, he shoots out, porcupine like, around him. It would be better had Racine republished his critic's exceptions with his own

'Britannicus,' he would have been spared the necessity of insinuating that they were dunces, he would have proved them so. It is a beautiful play. I also read his prefaces to 'Berenice,' 'Bajazet,' and 'Mithridate.' I could see little of the beautiful country through which I passed to-day for the mist. Arrived at my lodgings, I entered immediately on business.

February 18*th.*—G—— called as I was on the point of going out to seek him. I had been looking at the ivy leaves playing in the sunshine upon the city wall before my window, and thinking how easy was the lesson of content with health, when he produced himself as an instance. He showed me the Institution, and we walked upon the Castle walls together. What long recollections he brings to me; he was what I may term the first cordial admirer in my art that I had; and he has been as unchanging as the laurel leaf. I acted pretty well this evening, but in the dagger scene wanted that fresh natural manner so real and impressive on an audience. Thank God, was not angry or harsh.

February 19*th.*—G—— was waiting to intercept me, as I came down, and carried me off to breakfast. I had the sense to ask for my account to-day, which otherwise would have been *à maitre d'hôtel* I suspect. What a silly shyness is that which seems to shrink from being thought prudent and careful! The essay I read yesterday on the drama and its professors will, I hope, sustain me in my desire of upholding in myself and for my dear children a respectable as well as honourable character. But an actor has more temptation than other men. I can scarcely enter a theatre without seeing beauty that too often cares not to conceal a flattering approval of one's talent, and that would not receive with avidity a reciprocal homage. What other condition in life brings you into personal contact with beauty under such dangerous circumstances? It is my fortune, not my merit, God knows, to have escaped unscathed in reputation.

February 20*th.*—Disturbed in my bed by the violence of the storm (which carried away slates, chimneys, and blew down more than twenty trees on the Castle Hill) I thought to pass my day within, and opened my Virgil at the Sybil's prophetic fury, and read to the preparation for Misenus' obsequies. Began a letter

of advice to my dear wife, which was interrupted by the entrance of G——, who, in our conversation, repeated to me his recommendation of preparing materials for my Memoir. It is worth thinking of. From the scene of devastation made by the storm on the Castle Hill, we returned to the Institution, where I spent some time in looking over the plates of Stuart's 'Antiquities of Athens,' with which I was much disappointed. On the contrary, the accuracy of Gell's 'Sketches of Pompeii' gave me much pleasure. After a short walk with G—— to the river, red and swollen, I went to dinner.

February 21*st*.—Read the first part of a paper on the Druidical religion in Scotland; was not previously aware that the 'rocking-stones' are artificially disposed, and that they are Druidical monuments. Rehearsed with civility; had occasion to observe how much country practice is likely to induce slovenly habits unless caution is constantly used. In my walk with G—— afterwards, was struck with the commanding position of the Castle Hill; remarked the mound behind the jail to be either Danish or British. How easy it is to be happy is obvious from G——'s state of enjoyment; careless of any doctrine beyond that of duty to one's neighbour, he revels in the liberty of field and sky, indifferent to a religion and thoughtless on an hereafter. I have thought on our conversation of last night: real chastity and the charity of Christ are to be found in no scheme of philosophy. My performance of Iago to-night was an example of what I wrote this morning. There was a want of sustained earnestness and spirit; there was no proper direction of the sight, and, in consequence, a scowl instead of clear expression, besides a want of abstraction in the soliloquies.

February 22*nd*.—Yesterday I omitted to rebuke myself for the petulance with which I rated the man who carries my clothes. If we examine our relations with mankind, we have no right to show anger to any man; it is the right only of the tyrant over his slave, and there is first the right of tyranny in the abstract to be established. To be angry with any one is to assume a pretension to superiority that men are least disposed to allow. Why cannot I reflect before I commit myself in word or action? My morning has been passed in rehearsing, after which I called on G——. I was amused with the Othello last night

speaking the word 'veritable' with the French accent as "*Most veritarble.*" I feel tired, and perhaps have no real cause for regret at the quantity of leisure time left to me in this vacation. Packing and a mind in an unsettled state have not allowed me to derive much benefit from books to-day. Vanity and a diseased imagination, the evil result of a neglected youth, are the sources of my errors and my follies. My engagement concluded with *éclat* to a well filled house; I acted well, and am grateful for what I have gained. Went to tea and say adieu to G—— after the play.

Liverpool, Angel Inn, February 27th.— More attention to economy is necessary; more attention to my professional studies. Read the two first odes of Horace's Book of Epodes. One speaking the very throbs of friendship's heart, the other presenting picture after picture of the joys and charms of nature and a rural life: it is quite beautiful. Gave an attentive reading to the 'Merchant of London.'

Dublin, Sunday, March 3rd.—I am forty years of age! Need I add one word to the solemn reproof conveyed in these, when I reflect on what I am and what I have done? What has my life been?—a betrayal of a great trust, an abuse of great abilities! This morning, as I began to dress, I almost started when it occurred to me that it was my birthday.

March 5th.—Finished Schiller's 'Thirty Years' War,' which is little more, if more, than an extended gazette. It has, however, made me acquainted with the actions, and in some instances the characters of men, whose names were only known to me before. Tilly, Mansfeldt, Elector Palatine, Maximilian, Wallenstein, Pappenheim, Oxenstiern, Horn, Banner, Jorstensohn, Weimar, &c., &c. Noted two emendations in rehearsing Macbeth this morning. Acted Macbeth with spirit, earnestness, and self-possession: carried into effect the corrections I had thought of in the morning. Was obliged to appear before the audience after the play. To what end is thought or care, when next morning we read notices of our labours by the ignorant and incompetent?

March 6th.—Deliberated for some time on a very polite invitation to dinner this day from Sir Hussey Vivian: reflected that I must relinquish altogether, or imperfectly complete my letter of advice and consolation to my beloved wife; and

also distress myself in the accumulation of business that must result from this indulgence of my inclination and curiosity. The proper study of mankind is man, and I like to contemplate him under his various phases. But I concluded against the pressing entreaties of Calcraft to remain at home. I neglected my calls to-day, but after a long walk wrote to my Catherine and afterwards gave a reading which was much wanted to the 'Merchant of London.' I was right in remaining to attend to my duties. Perceive that much improvement is to be obtained by attention at rehearsals; and in my profession, as in my observation of Catherine's progress, discern the meaning and admit the truth of the metaphysician who defines genius to be patience.

March 8th.—Passed a very agreeable evening in dining at the Artillery Mess with Colonel Michell. Met Colonel Hustler, Major Gordon, whom I had known before at Twiss's, Du Plat, Colonel Webber Smith, Horse Artillery, just returned from the siege of Antwerp, who gave an amusing account of the gallantry of a *vivandière* attached to the 25th Regiment. Du Plat spoke of Fitzgerald, long since dead, and others of James, now on duty here. Were I a man of the world, how easy to enjoy the world and retirement together!

March 9th.—I acted not equal to myself; I fancied the audience were restless and indisposed to listen, which made me nervous and hasty and deprived me of my self-possession. As I advanced, I improved, and ended with effecting a tolerable impression. In Puff I was earnest and animated: the farce went well. My chief paragraph was a "forthcoming refutation of Malthus, by the Duc de Berri." On being drawn out after the play, I said: "It is a very poor requital of the kind approbation which I have always received in this city, to assure you that as I invariably revisit it with pleasure, so I never leave it without regret. The tragic actor addresses himself to the feelings of his auditors, and as yours are never slow in responding to the tones of truth and nature, I may justly be proud when honoured with your approval. To merit it will be my earnest wish, and with a faithful recollection of how much I am your debtor, I respectfully take my leave." Supped with Calcraft: quite worn out.

March 10th.—With a violent effort I extracted myself

from my bed, and without delay proceeded to the preparations for my journey. Again I refused the petition of a woman, whom I had before relieved, in consequence of the vile, hypocritical cant she addressed to me, asking me "If I was a parent;" and, in another note, hoping "As it was the Sabbath, I should not refuse." Calcraft paid, but reverted to the subject of the command. I was resolute; for I felt, had I offered, he ought not to have received an abatement. After completing my arrangements, leaving cards for Mrs. Hemans and Mr. Colles, I set off in a carriage with Mr. Calcraft and Miss Huddart to Kingstown; as we passed, the horse of an outside car ran away, and rushed against another hack car, overturning horse, carriage, and passenger: much fright,. but fortunately little injury. The Bay of Dublin was, as usual, beautiful; it was high tide, and a London steamer crossed and entered the harbour close to Howth. The mountains and the sea so immediately within view of the city add greatly to its beauty and salubrity. We dined at the Royal Hotel. How disenchanting in the female character is a manifestation of relish for the pleasures of the table! On board the *Thetis* I took leave of Calcraft, and was indebted to the kindness of Captain Townley for a state cabin, which I found most convenient. We had N.E. and E. winds blowing fresh through the night with hail and rain. The evening was clear and the scene with the passing vessels interesting. I turned in early.

Manchester, March 11th.—After a tossing, wakeful night, the only solace to which was the thoughts of my Catherine, I made a tolerably comfortable toilette and breakfast, and enjoyed the prospect of a calm sea weltering in the sunshine, the Welsh line of coast from the snow-clad heights of Penmanmawr to the opening of the Clwyd, the peak of Moel Famma, the mouth of the Dee, and the Lancashire shore with the beacons on it, and the vessels of various kinds moving within our view. We entered by the middle channel. I found Townley to be a friend of Knowles. We landed after ten o'clock, and with some trouble got our luggage to the railway station, whence, after waiting half an hour, we rushed along to Manchester. At my lodgings I found a very loquacious landlady, who oppressed my exhausted spirits with the history of her family.

I tried to play, but effort must have been too perceptible throughout the performance. The company is very indifferent, "two of the eleven" in a state of intoxication.

March 12*th.*—There is little time for thought, when morning and evening are consumed in the theatre. Nothing particular occurred at the rehearsal. In the afternoon I wrote letters of business, and devised plans, which afterthought induced me to pause upon. I did think of returning home next week: subsequent reflection shows me that I may both save and earn money by remaining absent. I acted "the Stranger" tolerably well, but was too much in appearance on the stage; not direct nor careless enough in action and carriage. On returning home I sat down to read over Othello; the idea of which, even here, gave me a sensation of nervousness. I am inclined to reproach myself for my precipitation in declining the reduced terms offered me at Bath and Newcastle. Perhaps, however, I was not wrong.

March 13*th.*—Have given up the entire day to the rehearsal, considerations and preparation of 'Othello.' The Iago of Cooper was a very bad performance, neither distinctness of outline, nor truth of colour. Of my own Othello I am inclined to speak in qualified terms. There was not exactly a lack of spirit in the early scenes, but a want of freshness and freedom in its flow must have been manifest. I was nervous, and under that oppression effort will show itself. The audience, as cold as the snow that was falling at the beginning, waxed warmer and warmer, and actually kindled into enthusiasm at the burst in the third act, which was good, but the part still requires much study. The address to the Senate, the arrival at Cyprus, the second scene of the fourth act and the last act, demand all my care and energy. The house was very thin, and I am yet irresolute as to my further course.

March 14*th.*—I lay late this morning, having slept little in the night, and feeling much fatigued. Rehearsed Pierre ('Venice Preserved') better than I expect to act it. I perceive how very much of the effect of acting depends on earnestness and spirit. Quite overcome by drowsiness, the effect of last night's wakefulness or this day's dinner, which was very moderate, I slept half an hour. Acted correctly, but rawly: to do justice to myself in Pierre, I ought to give the part a

thorough revival and practice. Was made very happy in my mind by a letter from my dear wife. Wrote to her chiefly on domestic arrangements.

March 15*th.*—At rehearsal this morning could not give much attention for the cold that depressed me. My thoughts are sickly as well as my body. Would I could relieve them! The afternoon of a dinner *maigre* was necessarily given to a perusal of 'Werner.' My acting of the character I scarcely ought to notice, so dependent are its efforts on the other parts, that their inefficiency or incorrectness neutralises his best efforts. I quite suffered during the play. My mind too, in consequence of my bodily ailment, is not under my control: I am longing for home, yet cannot in prudence purchase my own enjoyment at such a sacrifice of money.

March 16*th.*—I have dispatched a large sum to my bankers to-day, for which I thank God. In the play I acted Iago pretty well, but was certainly disconcerted, if not annoyed, by the share of applause bestowed on Mr. Cooper. What little beings does selfishness make us! In the farce I was mangled by the shameful idleness of the actors.

March 18*th.*—Before I rose, read odes in Horace. That beautiful one to Mæcenas on the happiness of competency found ready assent, and infused much delight in my mind. The poetry and philosophy are equally charming. Might not the line "converso in pretium Deo" be well applied to the churchmen of the present day? Some passages in Milton, which I read, served as a comment on, or rather a confirmation of the truth and wisdom of the Roman lyrist. Opening at random Racine's 'History of the Port Royal' I found some shocking evidences of the villainy of the Jesuits, both as individuals and as an order. What a scourge has that precious blessing, religion, been made by the impious and blaspheming sophistry of man! Read in last week's debate the Bishop of London's vindication of the wealth of the clergy! Appeared before a wretched assemblage of devoted play-goers in the part of Virginius, which neither my health, spirits, nor interest, could encourage me to act. I made some saving hits in passages; and tried experiments through it.

March 19*th.*—For my health's sake, took a walk of about three miles up and down Oxford Road. Thought on many things:

my father's inconsiderate speculation here and consequent ruin—its effect on my destiny; the mystery of human nature; and the sweet musings on my darling children on seeing a little girl about the age and form of dear Nina, came like delight upon my spirit. Read many pages of Racine's 'History of Port Royal.' My acting in Tell to night was bad, but had the excuse of bad health and audience. I wish I could offer any excuse for my ill-temper.

March 20th.—Acted Werner with unusual force, truth, and collectedness, finished off each burst of passion, and in consequence entered on the following emotion with clearness and earnestness. The house was miserable.

March 21st.—I have done nothing else to-day beyond rehearsing, taking a very short walk, and reading part of Oakley preparatory to my performance of it, which merits little commendation. It is a character, as being very easy, that I ought to play well; and merit censure for not doing it better than well.

March 22nd.—Read over Wolsey for to-mŏrrow evening and looked at my accounts, which, thank God, are more satisfactory than they have lately been. Read over again my Catherine's last letter, and let my thoughts loose on their ramble home. Read the part of Scroope, and acted it effectively, but not with the truth, reality, and taste that would satisfy my own judgment. Acted the scene of Joseph Surface middlingly. The house was much better for the bill, and I am glad to have rendered Miss Huddart such a service. The play excited so much interest, that Mr. Cooper was recommended to take it to-morrow night, but he preferred playing 'Henry VIII.,' which I do not envy him.

March 25th.—Went to the theatre to see 'Victorine,' which increased the previous depression of my spirits. How very painful is the contemplation of a woman who has yielded up her virtue, and how miserable does the reflection on the brutal character of vice among the low thieves of a metropolis make the mind. It is hopeless depravity. What are we here for? I was perhaps additionally moved by sitting in the box I used when a boy, before my prospects changed, seeing the very drop-scene that my father placed there twenty-five years ago. Much of the past came back upon me.

Carlisle, March 29th.—Woke before my appointed hour, but rose refreshed, and with a sensation of relief in quitting Manchester. My journey offered me little to remark upon: the sort of early loiterers in a manufacturing town made their wonted appearance about the coach, to make one question again the general influence of civilization. Lancaster Castle from its site, its present appropriation, and as having been the place of my poor father's confinement, arrested my attention, as did Garstang Castle, from not having before noticed it, and Kendal Castle from its beautiful situation. A very heavy snow storm on Shap Fells made that wild country more desolate and dreary than usual; I love the heath and the free breeze of the hills. Passed by the theatre at Carlisle, which my father built, in seeking my letters: thought of many days, acts, and feelings for ever gone.

Edinburgh, March 30th.—A striking instance of the dangerous effects of precipitation showed itself to day. A month ago, I could not reason down the annoyance of wounded pride arising from B——'s refusal to be my boy's godfather: this morning I took up his letter to answer it, and it seems to me most proper and affectionate. Pride and passion! where would ye have left me? Thank God, I have replied to it as I ought. My day has been an idle one. I have read some pages of Tasso, the combats between Ottone, Argante, and Tancredi; some part of Terence's 'Heautontimorumenos,' the excellent scene of Chremes rebuking Clitipho and Syrus sending him away; two essays of Bacon on 'Custom' and 'Nature;' and Shakespeare's exquisite scenes between Angelo and Isabel. I walked upon the Calton Hill, after posting my letters.

I read Racine's letters to some over zealous Jansenists, and his discourse on the admission of the younger Corneille, the Abbé Colbert, and Berquet to the Academy. Finished yesterday his history of the 'Monastery of Port Royal,' so amusing from the credulity, simplicity, and earnestness of the writer; the insight into the Roman Catholic religion through its various forms; its effect in confining the powers of the mind exemplified in Racine's servile adulation, or rather idolatry of Louis; the anatomical view it affords of the means, principles, and purposes of the Jesuits; and also for the various individual characters, both interesting and entertaining

that it makes to pass before us. In his two letters against the Jansenist defenders of Port Royal, it is not clearly seen whether his temporary hostility was aroused by their censure of dramatic poetry or acted on in deference to the implacability of Louis: his praises of that bad man are almost disgusting.

Particularly noted the superior effect, as well as the diminution of labour in the marked discrimination, with which I acted Virginius this evening, though unprepared, and at first careless of my performance. This resulted from thinking on the too artificial style of the young gentleman who played Othello last night, and contrasting his and Kean's methods, though they are patches from one piece, with my own. I see how much of my conception I lose by precipitancy: it does not extract one spark of fire the less, but tempers energy so "as to give it smoothness." I hope I may now exclaim, εὕρηκα! To notice one among many instances of natural and powerful effect, I may record the embracing and rebuking Virginia and committing her to Icilius just before hurrying away to the field, which I never did so well.

April 3rd.—Wrote to dearest Catherine. Received letter from her; and one from Mr. Farren asking me to play Puff for his benefit! Acted well. I perceive by my observation of last night, that the great defect of my style is hurry and want of clear discrimination—I mean discrimination, not in one's own mind, but made palpable to and impressed on an audience. Let me not lose sight of this!

April 4th.—Called on Allan, and saw his Orphan on the easel, his sketches of the rooms, &c., at Abbotsford, and the study of his picture of Rizzio's Murder. He is a very interesting man; he promises to come and see me on his arrival in London. Called on Mrs. Spence, and chatted. Received two petitions, but I unlearn my own precepts of generosity here. Answered Mr. Farren's letter, declining to act Puff. Played "The Stranger" pretty well, but had particular evidence of the comparatively phlegmatic temper of this audience in the applause to the burst in act fourth. Supped with Mr. Pritchard and met a party, with whom I was amused.

London, Elstree, April 9th.—Had the comfort of reaching my chambers, stiff and wearied: disappointed in not finding Catherine

and my baby there; dressed myself, and set out to catch the *Crown Prince* coach, which I missed, and came to the parting of the roads by an Hemel Hempstead one. Walked with a quiet light step towards Elstree, and reached my dear home about half-past ten. What can I record beyond this? As Francesca says: "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avanti?" I found my darling boy much better than I could have expected, my dearest Nina in full health, and all well! I looked round the house, and about the ground, satisfying myself with reviewing what was pleasing for not being new. I only looked over my accounts, talking in idle gossip the rest of this happy day away. I can only thank God, as I humbly and fervently do, for so dear and precious a gift as the home with which He has blest me, and for the feeling to appreciate and enjoy it.

April 10*th.*—Immediately on coming down, which I did at a late hour, I lunched and set off in the carriage to town with Catherine and my boy. Called at the theatre. Endeavoured at my chambers to prepare myself for night, but found a difficulty in settling and concentrating my thoughts. Endeavoured to act Macbeth well, but found myself strange to the stage, the size of the theatre, and the effect of my own voice. My earnestness must have been a redeeming quality in my acting, as the applause was frequent; as I advanced, I think I improved, and my death was very warmly applauded. I was called for at the fall of the curtain, and obliged to go forward. I returned to chambers, where Catherine was waiting to accompany me in the carriage to Elstree with dear Willie, who was much better.

April 16*th.*—Very unwell indeed: did not leave my room. Time utterly lost to me, mind and body. And this night Covent Garden Theatre was closed in consequence of the number of performers unable to attend their duty from illness, a circumstance without precedent in my recollection. Read, although with some difficulty, and not with my mind in a sufficiently clear state to apprehend quickly, the review of Hare's translation of Niebuhr's 'History of Rome.' Much interested in it. He offers petulant authors a lesson in the silence he preserved to every attack made to his theories.

April 17*th.*—Received news of Drury Lane Theatre being closed until Saturday next in consequence of the many absentees

from indisposition among the performers. I could not help occasionally feeling this illness, the anxiety of my wife and sister, the care to preserve quiet, and all the efforts to soothe the pain and allay the irritation of a sickbed, as a rehearsal of the eventful scene that must one day be acted when I must feel, in addition to my bodily sufferings, that I must leave the dear friends of my heart—the blessed children of my love.

April 19th.—The Haymarket Theatre is closed until Wednesday next on account of the illness of the performers.

April 21st.—To day, thank God, I tasted the pure air again! I humbly offer up my thanks to Almighty God for his numberless mercies and bounties, and am particularly called upon now to acknowledge gratefully my restoration from the severe sickness with which I have been afflicted. I feel that my system has been overworked, and brought into a most excitable state of predisposition to illness. I quite enjoyed the free inspiration of the atmosphere and the warm sunshine. The flowers and trees had unusual interest for me. I read the newspapers, in which I find much to employ reflection, but little to improve my estimation of mankind. The prominent facts in the world's history that delight a thinking man are very few indeed.

April 23rd, Shakespeare's Birthday.—On this day I was to have met the Garrick Club at dinner in honour of Shakespeare's birthday, and intended to have felt their dispositions towards erecting some memorial to Mrs. Siddons; instead of which I am walking with the help of a stick through my garden and field, endeavouring to regain the health and strength of which I feel the want so much. The day is very pleasant, and the garden looks very cheerful to me. I walked to tire myself, and then came in to write some letters. Have been obliged to put off to next year the new gravelling our walks, for which I am not sorry.

April 24th.—Obliged to return to my bed, after an ineffectual effort to dress myself. Very weak and unwell, and in great apprehension of a more serious turn to my disorder: my pulse at fifty eight, and my nervous system in a state of painful irritation. Could neither address myself to write, read, or talk, nor suffer any one to read to me. Felt better towards night, but very far from comfortable. Turned over the leaves of Crebillon's plays, and of Corneille's: became acquainted

with the fact of Foote having taken his 'Liar' from that poet's 'Le Menteur:' looked also through the pages of 'Le Festin de Pierre,' by Corneille, which seems to me the best of any of the pieces dramatised on the story of 'Don Juan.' Turned over some leaves of Voltaire.

April 25th.—Saw by newspapers that Mr. Bunn is made lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, but I must "abide the change of time." Looked at a small volume entitled "An account of Caspar Hauser, a youth kept in a dungeon till seventeen years old!' I disbelieved the whole story—at least, it is not like truth.

Sunday, April 28th.—Answered several notes and then walked round the garden with my wife and little girl and sister. This is an enjoyment to me. I thank God for the general appearance of improving health through my whole family. Read some letters of Junius, with the bold sharp style of which I am amused. Read prayers with my family at night for the first time these many weeks. I thank God for the power to do so.

Sunday, May 5th.—Knowles sent me his play of 'The Wife, a Tale of Mantua.' The weather is really delicious; it is a luxury to breath the air, to inhale the fragrance of the flowers, and listen to the music of the birds, watching the graceful motion of the gently waving boughs. As a contrast I read the newspaper: the parliamentary debates, the actions and speeches of Lord Althorp, Hobhouse, Peel, Spring Rice, &c. Went to morning service.

London, May 6th.—I came to town with my family, principally that Mr. Earle might see Catherine and Nina. My morning was occupied in executing commissions for home, until I parted from my darlings to see Mr. Bunn at the theatre. My conversation with him was not satisfactory; my benefit will probably be sacrificed, and I cannot see my way into next season. My conversations with Cooper and Reynolds on the subject of Covent Garden being managed by myself, leave me still in doubt. I remained in town to see the German opera of 'Fidelio,' which, though short, is to an English auditor rather heavy. The general acting also disappointed me; it was opera-acting, the same unnatural gesticulation and redundant holding up of arms and beating of breasts. Madame Schroeder Devrient is a splendid exception to the

common-place of the rest: it was as tender, animated, passionate, and enthusiastic as acting in an opera could be; she quite abandoned herself to her feelings—she was admirable. Next to her came the chorus.

May 7th.—Went to Drury Lane to see Malibran—what an artiste! Whether it be that excellence gains an advantage in competition by producing the last effect, and thereby leaving its impression strongest, I do not know; but perhaps it is to this cause I should attribute the superiority, as it seemed, of Malibran to-night over what appeared to me perfection in Schroeder yesterday. It perplexes me to decide between these two gifted creatures. Schroeder Devrient absolutely thrilled me, made me start, and, some time after, the agitation into which she threw me had not subsided. Malibran delighted me; I think I may say there was greater variety of excellence in her performance, and I fancy, though loth to let it escape me lest it should not be strictly just, that there is rather more finish in Malibran.

May 8th.—Harley called by appointment to talk over the state of the profession. Cooper came to excuse himself, on account of a new farce, from his Elstree engagement. We had much conversation on the subject of the theatre; the opinion seemed to be that it would be much better for the profession that Covent Garden should be opened by others than by the Drury Lane manager; it was agreed to wait the event of Mr. Bunn's negotiation.

Elstree, May 24th.—I was in earnest beginning business, after my walk round the garden and playing with my children, when Sir John Marshall arrived to interrupt me. We came to a perfect understanding on the subject of the lease—went over the premises and to the reservoir; he lunched, gave us a very warm invitation from Lady M. and self. Related anecdotes of Thurtell's * brother, and the early occupants of Mr. King's house. Fate of the daughters, &c. Left us about three o'clock; Birch and self went down to the water and rowed till nearly five, when Messrs. Dow and Spence arrived and came to us. In conversing with them after dinner, I allowed myself most imprudently to criticise the knowledge and impartiality of the

* Elstree was the scene of the murder of Mr. Weare by Thurtell and others in 1823.—Ed.

public press. Why cannot I be silent on what, if my opinions are promulgated, I only aggravate? This impotent display of contempt or anger is most unwise. Never betray hostility until you have the power to crush, and then use it only to prove a better nature than that of your paltry antagonist.

May 25th.—Came early to town; got my clothes from Wilkins, and found a note from Miss Ellen Tree expressing her regret at not being allowed to act for me. Saw Bunn at the Theatre, where I took places for Lady Marshall. Packed up my trunk and wrote to Sir J. M. with orders. On my way to Richmond with Harley, Birch, and Spence, met Jones, who promised to do M. Perez for my night. Passed several pedestrian mourners on the road and some carriages. Among them Mr. Ducrow's. Rushed into the room where Kean's remains lay, poor creature! Lee hoped that Mr. Harley approved what he had done. In the drawing-room shook hands with young Kean, Stanfield, Knowles, Clint. Introduced to Mr. Forster. After some delay, furnishing mourners, &c., we were summoned; Braham and self, first, as supporters; we crossed the Green and paced the crowding streets amid the loud remarks and repetition of names by the multitude. Kean's coffin placed before our pew led me into very sad ruminations: contrasting his moments of burning energy with the mass of cold corruption fronting me. The church was crowded by curious and gay visitors, and was distressingly hot; his son and Mr. Lee were much affected; the anthem was beautiful but long. The procession returned to the house in its original order; I could make little observation on anything around me, being under such a *surveillance*. Braham invited me to dine with him at the Star and Garter, but I was obliged to decline. I shook hands very warmly with young Kean, who thanked me; and, with Harley, went in search of the carriage, which met us on the Green and very rapidly took us to town.

Birmingham, May 26th.—I kissed my darling babes in the nursery and, taking leave of Letitia, also my wife, I went to the Plough to wait for the *Crown Prince* coach. My travelling companions, on getting into the coach, did not offer me the prospect of a very pleasant day; but the perusal of the translation of Goethe's 'Faust' employed and amused my mind the greater part of the journey. A literal translation must leave

much of the spirit behind, and in following, as I suppose, many of the inversions of the original, adds to its obscurity. In the simple passages of Margaret's description of her little sister's life and death in the last scene, her wish to have her own infant in her grave beside her, for "no other creature would be near her," I was much affected. On approaching Birmingham I saw the terrible *affiches* of Mr. Ducrow which, with other ill-boding circumstances, prepared me for a bad week. On arriving I inquired for my old admiring friend, and could not at first catch the low muttering tones, in which the servant told me she was dead! I was quite shocked. I had known her since I could remember anything. Death has been very busy this year. Mr. Cooper called and sat a short time.

May 27th.—I attended rehearsal, and the whole fate of the engagement was visible to me: a wretched company, and a mere wandering manager who ventures because he has nothing to lose. It is quite unfortunate that I came; but it must be endured, and it is always wise to make the best even of the worst. Wrote to Bunn and Palmer, for I am in a terrible dilemma, my trunks not having arrived; in consequence of which we must change the play from 'Macbeth' to-morrow. I acted in parts pretty well, and seemed to carry the audience—they were not a heavy load to bear in any way—with the interest of the play. The house was very bad, but I have no right to complain of Birmingham. I noted several things in my acting, which will lead to the correction, I think, of a faulty principle.

May 28th.—I acted Hamlet although with much to censure, yet with a spirit and feeling of words and situations that I think I have never done before. The first act was the best, still, at the exit of the Ghost in both scenes and afterwards, polish and self-possession is requisite. In the second act, almost general revision. Third act, the soliloquy wants a more entire abandonment to thought, more abstraction. Ophelia's scene wants finish, as does the advice to the players. The play scene was very good, and most of the closet scene, but in parts my voice is apt to rise, and I become rather too vehement; latter part wants smoothness. End of the play was good. Energy! Energy! Energy!

May 31*st.*—A letter from Bunn, in which he now mentions his uncertainty of getting Taglioni for my benefit, which before he taught me to rely on as sure! Wrote to him, but corrected my letter, and sent one solely on business. Went to rehearsal; made a trifling present to the little boy who, in Albert last night, so disconcerted and enraged me. I deserved a severer penalty. Walked with Mr. Cooper, discoursing on the chances of next season.

London, June 4*th.*—At five o'clock, left Birmingham in the *Red Rover*, with a guard dressed for the part in a red coat and red hat. Much of the way I slept, and was averse to produce my book of 'Rule a Wife' on account of the fellow-passenger of my journey. On arriving I found, by a note from Bunn that Vestris declined Estifania, and I had a play to seek. After a few moments' talk, the 'School for Scandal' was decided on, myself as Charles. Some time elapsed before I had read the part, and saw my unfitness for it; and I then had my name taken down and retained my former part of Joseph. This is not such a bill as the Tragedian of the Theatre should put out, and I feel it a sort of suicide—but look at the company, look at the time, and then, what is to be decided on for Monday?

Elstree, June 8*th.*—Went to the theatre, saw Mr. Bunn, heard of Mrs. Orger's good-natured acquiescence, and of the misunderstanding that had existed on Taglioni's engagement, M. Laporte never having arranged with her for my night. Returned to Elstree, looked into Jefferson, whose character improves upon me with my increased knowledge of it. It is very pleasant to see in one's own mind prejudices dissolve before the approach of truth. I look on Jefferson, instead of an ambitious and factitious demagogue, as a clear-sighted, single-hearted philanthropist and legislator: my opinion once was far different. He had his failings and the prejudices of climate and education, but he was an uncommon man.

London, June 10*th.*—Our hay began to be cut under the hottest sun of the season; and I left it with Catherine and Letitia to attend my benefit * in town. Found several affairs

* The play was, 'The School for Scandal,' followed by 'The Maid of Cashmere:' Taglioni, Malibran, Madame Schroeder Devrient, and Madame Vestris appeared for Macready's benefit.—Ed.

connected with it demanding my attention. Arranged what was necessary for the night both at chambers and at the theatre. Mr. Dow called. The Duchess of St. Alban's sent two guineas for two tickets, which I did not think worth while otherwise to notice than by sending the messenger to the box office. The day was overpoweringly hot. I had some fuss about my dress, hat, &c. Acted as well as I could. Miss Philips looked all that the author could have imagined of the beauty and modesty of Maria. What is Taglioni? A realization of some young poet's dream, whose amorous fancy offered to his slumbers beside some stream or fountain the nymph whose divine being consecrated the natural beauty of the scene. She presents to me an idea of the soul of the Peri tenanting a woman's form. She looks wholly *la Bayadère*, and her graceful pensiveness is only equalled by Flaxman's Pandora.

June 11*th*.—My indisposition, a feeling of inability to rise this morning, was at least equal to my reluctance to go to bed. The wind was high, even to tempest, occasionally; the hay cut yesterday looked very well; but the rain has come to place all our hopes in jeopardy. Walked in the fields and garden. Is not this better than to have been one of the rout, whose carriages and servants filled Portland place last night?

June 12*th*.—Knowles called, asking me to join the Covent Garden performers in petition for a third theatre. I see that my present position demands from me vigilance, constant attention, and indefatigable industry. *Untiring energy* is the material I ought to bring into play. *I will.* Pasta and Talma are both evidences of what patient application can do.

June 17*th*.—My performance of Wolsey was, on the whole, the best I had ever given of the part: there is care, and concentration of feeling and energy upon some of the striking points particularly needed; but in the general portraiture there was more freedom, a more natural and yet more earnest delivery, a less stern and ascetic demeanour and appearance than I ever before gave to it; above all I was in possession of myself, and paused with meaning, and therefore with confidence. The applause was great at my entrance and final exit. I gave my usual gratuities to the servants. Talfourd came to my

room, highly pleased with the performance, and after going to the Temple, returned to sup with me.

June 28th.—My first visit to day was to the British Gallery, where I had the pleasure of looking at some of the masterpieces of Sir Joshua, his own portrait in spectacles (equal to many in my opinion) the marvellous expression of the Ugolino, Dido, Iphigenia, Infant Samuel, Fortune-Teller, Dr. Johnson, Rodney, Keppel, Dyer, Nelly O'Brian, Lord Lifford, and several other pictures, gave me great pleasure. My judgment would point out few of Lawrence's besides the heads of young Napoleon and himself, Lady Blessington, and Kemble. 'West, I cannot like. To great painters he stands among the mediocre; 'Mentor and Telemachus' pleased me as much as any of his pictures.

June 29th.—At the Exhibition this morning. Much to please me. Wilkie's Confessional, Collin's Stray Kitten, Landseer's Jack in Office, Mulready's First Voyage, all good. Etty, Callcott, Turner, and others have beautiful specimens of the high state of English art. Pleased with the Water Colour Exhibition, the most equal collection among the London galleries. Suffolk Street shows great improvement, and gives promise of much more. The panorama of Antwerp interested me as the representation of a siege; but Niagara is a failure. There is no distance, vastness, effect of colour—nothing. I almost felt indignant at the artist's presumption. It confirms my opinion of the impossibility to paint or describe this sublimest phenomenon of nature.

July 2nd.—I read Coleridge's 'Christabel,' which, though rich in the dress of poetical language, and stirring the heart with the thrill of expectation, yet leaves little impression on the mind.

July 7th.—In the newspaper was much struck with the grand appropriation of Lord Grey's expression of "standing by his order," which Mr. Brotherton made in the debate on the Factory Bill, declaring himself to have been employed in the factories till sixteen, pitying the children, and resolving to "stand by his order."

Elstree, July 12th.—After looking at the workmen about the house and in the field, resumed my study of Lear, the difficulty of which does not yet diminish before my attempts;

studied in practice parts of Hamlet and Anthony in the drawing-room. I ought to have began this as the season closed, while my mind was active; in thinking upon different characters, from disuse and relaxation, labour becomes harder and the faculties duller. To stop is to lose ground: most men in this world have to pull against a stream; at some period of their lives, all. I must work hard. In an interval of study I was playing with my little Willie, and the sight of him gave a spur to my work.

July 13th.—Finished the corrections of the 'Bridal,' and trust it with my hopes to its destiny. Studied Lear, and practised on Hamlet and Othello for three hours, after which walked down with dear Catherine to the water and took exercise for two hours, whilst she read Cowper's 'Garden' to me. I do not think the scientific part of the subject, or indeed any science, adapted for poetry: accuracy ties down the wings of imagination. His moral strain is beautifully sweet; and the indignant chastisement he inflicts on hypocrisy and false taste as severe as it is just.

London, July 17th.—Went to Drury Lane to see Paganini. His power over his instrument is surprising; the tones he draws from it might be thought those of the sweetest flageolet and hautboy, and sometimes of the human voice; the expression he gives to a common air is quite charming. His playing 'Patrick's Day' was the sweetest piece of instrumental music I ever heard; but he is a quack.

Elstree July 24th.—Finished the perusal of 'Sardanapalus,' which, for the fourth time, I think, I have examined on its capabilities for undergoing adaptation. It might have been an acting play, but it is too monotonous, passionless, and devoid of action, I fear, to satisfy an English audience. My whole evening has been spent in revolving the possibility of turning it to a representable form, and of considering the effect of his other plays. I reluctantly conclude upon abandoning the hope of them. We purchased a new cow to day, a very interesting event in our farm yard.

July 25th.—After walking about the premises, I turned over the leaves of Massinger's Plays in the faint hope of finding some convertible material, "but I find none, sir." Must make more use of my time, as my classical reading is fading from me.

July 27*th.*—Looked over my memoranda in hopes of finding material for a paper in the 'Keepsake.' See nothing that will answer the purpose, and must abandon it, as it is a distraction to my thoughts which should be intently fixed on more important affairs.

July 28*th.*—I have begun more seriously this month to apply to the study of my profession, impelled by the necessity which the present state of the drama creates. I do not feel that I have the talent to recall attention to an art from which amusement cannot be drawn but by an exertion of the intellect. The age is too indolent in part, and in part too highly cultivated. But while I see the desperate condition to which, at this late period of my life, my profession is reduced, I am not thereby inclined to let my spirits sink under the disheartening prospect. To do my best is still my duty to myself and to my children, and I will do it. I will contend while there is ground to stand on, even with neglect, the bitterest antagonist; and I will try to merit honours if I cannot obtain them. I have resumed my classics, to keep myself prepared for the education of my boy.

July 29*th.*—Dined with Talfourd, where Catherine and Letty met me. We spent a very cheerful day. In the evening Leigh Hunt came in, whom I was curious to see and gratified in meeting. Our conversation was chiefly theatrical: we seemed to part mutually good friends. I returned with Catherine and Letty in the carriage to Elstree.

July 30*th.*—Was fortunate enough to rise in good time this morning, and after my customary walk in the garden, and reading the *Examiner*, in which are some good extracts on female education, I sat down to Herodotus, and then turned my voluntary studies to Homer, on my darling boy's account, and ended with beginning 'Cicero de Oratore.' In these pursuits, and in the pleasures of the country I think I could satisfy my desire of happiness. Practised and read professionally for two hours and a half, Lear and Hamlet; in these labours I must not relax, but I am obliged to goad myself to the task.

August 3*rd.*—Read a little Homer, and pursued my study of Cicero, who tells us how very rare in his day were even tolerable actors; it seems that the scarcity has been of all time.

August 10*th.*—After dinner I took up the life of Newton (who attributes his triumph to "industry and patience"), but fell asleep, as I believe, from the effects of my dinner. I seem to eat moderately, and drink the weakest wine and water, and yet I suffer thus from my stomach. I believe I must at last weigh my food. Looked at 'Antony and Cleopatra' for arrangement.

August 11*th.*—Began Thucydides.

August 12*th.*—After tea, went over the words of Lear, Catherine holding the book, whereby I discovered how much I have yet to think of in the part, and how much to practise of that already thought upon, to arrive at any moderate degree of confidence: remained thinking on the part afterwards. Must give more attention still, and, with it all, I fear I never can produce a finished performance.

London, August 15*th.*—Arranged my stage clothes, and packed up what was ready for my tour. Saw J. Palmer, and gave orders for beard and Lear's dress. Dined with Jerdan and Captain Williams, whom I invited on Wednesday next to Elstree. Went with them to the Victoria Theatre—a very pretty *salle*, and well appointed. At the Victoria Theatre I saw Mr. Keeley and Miss Garrick. Why did I not speak to them? It was not pride, but a false shame which is always taken for it and does the exhibitor equal injury.

Elstree, August 17*th.*—Made my first essay in archery this year with Catherine and Lydia;* lunched in the field, where the labourers were carrying the hay; the day was very charming. Mrs. Chalk called. After walking down to the reservoir, I turned into the little field, when Tip gave chase to a gentleman's dog and drove it into the village, for which I flogged him severely. Letitia returned. I read a little of Lear; but am obliged to set the mark of reprehension on my loss of this valuable day. Let me hope better of the future.

August 19*th.*—After my customary walk, I applied myself to a continuation of my work on 'Antony and Cleopatra.' I subsequently took up Lear into the drawing-room, and read and practised a little, but I begin to lose the hope, by which I held, when the event was at a greater distance. There

* Miss Lydia Bucknill, now Mrs. Larden.—Ed.

is, however, one course to pursue, which may preserve my peace of mind when fortune has shook her wings over me, which is, to do my best and most. I did not make much progress to-day.

London to Bristol, August 24th.—Left London in the *Emerald* coach with a very affected, stupid woman, picked up at Kensington, and two more variously steeped in affectation, but equally dull, were taken up on the road. One made violent advances to me, which I received with complacent indifference. Slept most of the way. Vainly sought amusement from my fellow-passengers, and thought over part of Lear. My mind seldom permits a journey to seem tedious to me. Either recollection or association from history or fable, besides the dreamy fancies of my own discursive thoughts, give interest to familiar and even common-place scenery. We had a little rain at Melksham Spa. First heard of water being made combustible by solution of resinous matter. Query, is it so? The canal at Devizes has twenty-nine locks in a mile and a half. It is nearly twenty years since, with a heart palpitating between hope and fear, I first entered Bath. What changes since! What revolutions in the world around me, and the world within me! Is life worth possessing? I, who have so many blessings in it, cannot decide the question at once. On reaching Bristol was most civilly received by Mr. Niblett. Read newspapers, and went to bed.

August 26th.—Could not help wishing for the quiet of a country life, as I passed a very neat villa here, that I might dedicate my remaining years to the culture of my own mind, and the careful education of my children.

Swansea, August 27th.—I went to my first rehearsal of 'Lear,' with which I was much dissatisfied. I am not yet at ease in the character; I have much labour yet to bestow upon it before I can hope to make it such a representation as I am ambitious of. Spent five hours in rehearsing, and left the theatre jaded and worn out. Lay down after dinner and with pain in my limbs, and "between sleep and wake" made myself perfect in the last scene of 'Lear.' A poor player called Dunn, whom I remember in a dirty old coat as D. Dashall at Wexford, calling *rouleaux*, "roorloors," sent in a petition to me to buy some fishing-flies from him. Acted particularly well William Tell with collectedness, energy and truth; the audience felt

it; I spoke in my own manly voice, and took time to discriminate. I was much pleased.

August 29th.—Endeavoured to make the most of the day by beginning to pack up my clothes before rehearsal of 'Lear;' I found myself very deficient, undecided, uncollected—in short, unprepared for the attempt. After retirement, took a walk of two miles more to return Mr. Thomas, the portreeve's, call: the way along the hills above Swansea afforded beautiful views of the bay. Acted Lear. How? I scarcely know. Certainly not well, not so well as I rehearsed it; crude fictitious voice, no point—in short, a failure! To succeed in it, I must strain every nerve of thought, or triumph is hopeless. Woulds called and paid me; not a very profitable engagement, but I am seldom discontented. Letter from dearest Catherine; thank God, she is better. Packed up the remainder of my things. Paid servants of the theatre.

Gloucester, August 30th.—As I walked along the street to the coach-office this morning a little before four, I perceived clearly my want of directness, reality, and truth in Lear. Will not give it up. My failure last night, like Peter's overthrow at Narva, may be a step to final success. My coach passengers were not interesting, and I slept to Cardiff. I was recognised there and accosted, on getting into the coach, by Mr. Bird, who told me of the preparations for the Eistedfodd next year. I saw Mr. Parry there, on an Eistedfodd mission. Read Voltaire's 'Nanine,' with which I was much pleased; the action is well carried on and the sentiments are simply and strikingly expressed. Thought a little on Lear. Began Voltaire's 'Oreste,' of which I read something more than an act. A French woman in the coach (whose husband, an Englishman, breakfasted on cold veal, with a sauce of white sugar, oil, vinegar and mustard,) obliged me to go to sleep to escape conversation with her. At Chepstow, where it began to rain, we had a mother and daughter in exchange for the French and English from Swansea. The other old woman talked of the florid Gothic style of architecture preceding the Roman, and was a *savante* in her own opinion. On reaching Gloucester, I altered my route to Birmingham and Leeds, avoided error, and booked my trunk for London.

To Birmingham, Leeds, and Knaresborough. September 1st.—Began my day early in the Leeds mail, after a very comfortable night (only disturbed by two fancied gun-shots, dreaming I was at home, a sort of nightmare), and applied myself to the consideration of Lear, to which I gave much of my thought during the day. The waiter's wife and child were insides to Sutton, and to them, as to a poor woman with a child, I showed what civility I could. An odd person was in the breakfast-room at Derby, so officious in his civilities that I ascribed them to his love of chattering, and as a means of indulging it. I saw very distinctly Repton Church, where my dear mother was christened, and at Sheffield I passed the church that contains all that remains of her on earth. I hope to visit Repton, for every trace of her is interesting to me. Read the 'Orphelin de la Chine' of Voltaire, and was much pleased with a great deal of it.

Harrogate, September 2nd.—Walked to Harrogate, thinking of Lear, and saw Benn at the Granby; he gave me no assistance in furthering my wish to dispose of the property, but promised his rent. Went along the beautiful wood on the river's side to the Dropping Well, which is both beautiful and curious; bought some specimens of petrifaction; continued my walk along the opposite bank (and the walk is so varied and pleasing it needs no object beyond itself) to the cave where Eugene Aram and Houseman deposited the bones of Dan Clarke. It had been an hermitage, but nearly choked up with earth. It is now cleared away, and exhibits in its regular floors and steps its original purpose. Called on Mr. Powell, absent, and enjoyed the lovely and extensive view through the dingle and over the distant country from the Castle grounds; called again on Mr. Powell (again was gratified with the splendid view from the Castle), and deputed him to advertise and try to find a purchaser for the Granby. Mr. Gill called and I gave him my name to oppose the public-house license opposite the Granby. Read the newspaper and 'Eugene Aram.' Have been more interested this evening with the very ingenious and staggering defence of Eugene Aram, than by all the external beauty of the woods and waters, the overhanging cliffs and distant hills, the bright green slopes and shadowy outlines that have held me in rapturous gaze this morning. I

am even now almost inclined to doubt his guilt; my difficulty is in reconciling the cold-blooded meanness of the transaction with his clearly discriminating perception of right and wrong, his habits, his wants, and his pursuits. I would rather have hung Houseman and Terry. But perhaps this, like many anomalies in the physical world, is placed before us to teach us the impotency of our own reasoning. God and His works are inscrutable.

Elstree, September 4th.—Rose at a very early hour from a good night's rest to begin my day's journey onward to Elstree. The companions of my route were not remarkable, and my own thoughts, with my book, were agreeable and useful resources to me. I was amused at Warwick with the preparations for the races, and the persons crowding to it. At Leamington saw Captain Kater and his son, whom I persuaded to go to Warwick Castle, which he had not yet seen or intended to see. At intervals of sleep or conversation read various essays of Bacon; they made me think, and, as they always do, gratified me extremely. That on 'Envy' led me to question and condemn myself for the occasional "discontentment" in which I sometimes indulge, which I can find no reason to call by any other name than envy. It is as unjust to my condition in life, as it is mean and debasing in itself. I never suffer it to have a place in my mind when perceived; and I pray to God I may be able to eradicate it. Reached home, and had the comfort of finding my family well, for which I truly thank God. Listened to all the news, and noted down my accounts.

Brighton, September 9th.—After a little writing went to rehearsal, where I received my luggage and settled the business of the week. Discovered that I had been announced by mistake for the previous Monday, and that the play of 'Macbeth' had been acted with an apology for a substitute, owing to an error of Mr. Vining. Rehearsed tolerably well, and afterwards took a warm bath. Received an invitation to Worthing from Mr. Stanley, the manager, which I answered doubtfully. After dinner, I lay down from fatigue, and endeavoured, ineffectually, to recover my spirits, while Catherine, Nina, and Wallace went out to drive about the cliff. Acted Macbeth to a very fair house, but indifferently; there was a want of self-possession in the performance that caused an exuberance of physical effort

which never can have a proper effect when perceptible to an audience. There was precipitation and stress throughout which often cost me the applause I ought to have gained: my best attempt was the "To-morrow and to-morrow." Was very much fatigued, and went beaten to bed.

September 10*th.*—Acted Werner for the most part very well; although the characters were imperfect and ill-acted, the play was received with interest and enthusiasm. I was master of myself, and felt what I was doing, and how to do it. Mr. Stanley came from Worthing, and settled an engagement with me for Saturday next. He brought me a very kind message from Dr. Wooll, inviting me to his house. Came home in a fly, and thought much upon Sir R. Dudley's objection to my acting, that, "I was too lavish of physical efforts." He was right.

September 12*th.*—At rehearsal I again took the same precaution as yesterday, and hoped to have given a fresh and earnest representation of Hamlet this evening. Returning from the theatre, I called at the agency office to show all the sense I could of the attention I had received there. On the parade met Liston, looking pretty-well, but older and much graver—the flexibility of that humorous visage seems to stiffen under the chill of age. Wrote a letter of acknowledgment to Dr. Wooll. Lay down, while Catherine, &c., took their daily drive. Procured her a private box at the theatre; was anxious to play well, but felt myself ineffective, and was told by her of my hurry and want of deliberate method. In comparing my performances with my rehearsals, when I frequently speak and act with an abandonment and a reality that surprises me, I feel the great advantage which Kean, Miss O'Neill, and Mrs. Siddons enjoyed, in passing their earliest years upon the stage, and thereby obtaining a power of identification only to be so acquired.

Worthing, September 14*th.*—After settling all my accounts, and waiting some time for Wallace, we set off for Worthing. Most journeys are interesting to me, if merely from the change of object; on this road there is the western end of Brighton, the church of Shoreham, the Duke of Norfolk's suspension bridge, and "the sea, the sea" to keep attention awake. The last time I travelled on this road, my feelings and my situation

were as wretched as man's could well be. How grateful ought I not to be for the blessed contrast which this day affords! We reached a very pleasant hotel at Worthing on the beach, and from rehearsal, which offered me a doubtful prospect, I called on Dr. Wooll—poor Dr Wooll! "Heu! quantum mutatus." I dressed as well as I could without dresser, and acted as well as I could, earnestly wishing to please my poor old master. Much I did well; in the betrothment of Virginia the thought of my own beloved wife and child flashed across me, and I spoke from my soul—the tears came from my heart. Mr. Stanley called at the hotel and settled with me.

September 15th.—I saw in the *Globe* an announcement of my name for Prospero in the 'Tempest' on the opening night of Drury Lane Theatre. I felt very indignant at such an opening part, which Mr. Bunn knows very well I except to. I settled my bill, and set off on a very pleasant road towards London through Horsham, Dorking, and Leatherhead. At Kingston we lunched, and turned off through Twickenham, Isleworth, and Ealing, crossed the Uxbridge and Harrow Roads and reached Elstree by the Bushy Road.

Elstree, September 16th.—Was vexed at the loss of my bloodhound bitch, Luath, but amused with Letty's Irish hound, Bill: deaf, and answers occasionally to the name of Luath. Went over the garden and considered Mr. Bunn's letter, which I thought rude and imperious; returned the part of Prospero, as not being yet engaged in the theatre.

September 17th.—News was brought me in my dressing-room of Luath's return, having been brought back by the men-servants.

London, September 18th.—Went to Mr. Bunn's appointment at Drury Lane: he was absent, and after some delay I crossed to Covent Garden. He "could not understand" me, nor "I, him." He was ready to agree to everything in my "Algerine" engagement, as he called it, but when we came to the stipulation for "collateral security," he demurred, and reference to the motive becoming necessary, I was obliged to ask Dunn (who was present) to withdraw. I then observed upon the debt of £200 due to me on my Dublin engagement, and that we did not meet on equal footing. He talked and evaded; said "my father had also been unfortunate," and much that had no

relation to the case; and ultimately I altered my security to a stipulation that, "upon infringement, I should be free to leave the theatre," and so agreed on the engagement.

Elstree, September 19th.—Walked in the garden and yard, and spent the whole of the day in altering and writing out copies of my engagement, an accompanying letter making part of the agreement, with a letter to Mr. Bunn, intended only to put on record, *litera scripta*, the position in which we stand towards each other. Mr. Tomlins called, and offered me £35 for my largest rick, and left me, requesting I would not part with it for a pound more. I read Serle's *petit* drama in the evening, and was very much pleased with its humour, character, and pathos; the keeping of the piece is excellent. Before I went to bed I read Prospero, and as long as my eyes could keep open to it, in bed too. I am indolent and my mind is in an unsettled state. I have no good augury in my feelings of the engagement I have made.

London, September 25th.—Went to rehearsal of the 'Tempest,' and, to my astonishment, no less than that of the acting manager and prompter to see me, found there was none. This is an omen to draw prediction from.

October 5th.—To day being the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, I went to town by *Billings*, and executing some domestic commissions previously, attended the rehearsal of the 'Tempest' at half-past eleven. There was nothing to notice but its tedium, and the offer made me of a night's performance at Richmond, which I declined on the double reason of interference with my attention to business and anticipation of a longer and more lucrative engagement. Received two letters about new plays. Dined on a chop at the Garrick Club. Was obliged to force the locks of my trunks for my dress of Prospero; acted the part unequally, but maintained myself in the only great passage retained in the characterless, stupid old proser of common-place which the acted piece calls Prospero. The house was good, and the play went off well.

October 10th.—At theatre received an anonymous note on the subject of Lear, which came like a friendly breath upon my dying enthusiasm; a very kind note also from Gaspey, with extract from the *Observer's* critique on Prospero and his own remarks on Macbeth. Acted Prospero but indifferently; there

is little to sustain one's spirits, and mine could not bear up against the weight of the part (Dryden's Davenant!) and the oppression of my cold. Came back not well, and read the part of Oakley before I went to bed, and, in order to get the start of the study on my mind, read Biron ('Love's Labour 's Lost') again in bed. I wish to play what I have to do in an artist-like manner; but I feel I shall never receive the recompense which, comparatively, my attention and care might claim.

October 11*th.*—Read Ford in bed, which I am very anxious to act well. In reflecting on Lear, I begin to apprehend that I cannot make an effective character of it. I am oppressed with the magnitude of the thoughts he has to utter, and shrink before the pictures of the character which my imagination presents to me. Did not intend to go to rehearsal, but reflecting it was for a novice, I thought it my duty to go. I saw Miss Phillips and talked to her (perhaps more kindly than wisely) on the subject of the business cast to her. My own concerns are enough for me: at the Garrick Club, where I dined, I also allowed my opinions to be suspected, if not known, which I might as well have kept to myself. Nature has given us two ears, but only one mouth—why do we not take the hint?

October 12*th.*—Went to the rehearsal of Oakley. Many jests in the green-room; one of Fawcett falling through a trap on a man and thrashing him for it.

October 14*th.*—At the Garrick Club, where I dined; saw some rather favourable criticisms on Oakley, which gratified me in making me feel that I was not now so much the object of personal dislike. Lay down in my bed to read Pierre. Colonel Birch called, and I got up for him. I was truly glad to see him: he took away the case of razors I had intended for Calcraft. My acting of Pierre did not satisfy me, though I felt it to be better than my former efforts in the part. Mrs. —— more than realised my anticipations: it was the worst kind of rant that pervaded her performance. Wrote a note of excuse to Talfourd for next Sunday's dinner, in consequence of being announced every night this week.

October 16*th,* 17*th.*—Acted part of Posthumus with freedom, energy and truth, but there must have been observable an absence of all finish. To night there was a delay of nearly half an hour and consequent clamour at Covent Garden, the

singers having been unable to go through their songs. The play of 'Antony and Cleopatra' was called for to-morrow as a new play, but I induced Mr. Cooper to alter it to Saturday. On coming home I read part of Antony. The more I see of the management of Mr. Bunn, the more I find cause to blame the proprietor who gave the theatre to him!

October 22*nd.*—Acted Hotspur, I scarcely knew how. I could and should have done it well if I had had rehearsal to prove myself, and a few days to think upon it. Received a severe blow on the eye and cheek in falling, which I apprehend will be a large black eye. Cooper thinks I am so furious and so strong!

October 24*th.*—Took especial pains in acting Werner; made due pause, so as to discriminate clearly, and subdued all tendency to exaggeration. Satisfied myself.

October 28*th.*—Arrived in town; found myself late for the rehearsal, which was called at ten. Went to the theatre and, under the sensation of wearied body and mind, proceeded with the play. In the wardrobe found no dress for me, and lost my temper. Read a little of Leontes. Oppressed with weariness. Acted very ill, being literally imperfect. This disgusting management!

October 29*th.*—Dined at the Garrick Club; found very pleasant mention of my Leontes in the papers, and held a cheerful conversation with some, whom once I thought my enemies. I read through Hotspur, but failed in giving the effect of the previous evening to it: it was not collected nor artist-like, an absence of finish and point throughout. Is this my fault, or to be attributed to the hurried state of mind in which the manager keeps me? If it be the last, I ought to combat and overcome its evil influence.

November 1*st.*—Dined at the Garrick Club, where I saw Fladgate, Lindley, &c., who praised my Werner much, and likened my appearance at last to Ugolino. Slept from fatigue in waiting for two servants who did not come. Acted Macbeth passably.

Sunday, November 3*rd.*—Met the party at breakfast in good spirits and with feelings of pleasure and a sense of gratefulness for the blessings and comforts afforded to me in this world by the bounty of Almighty God. Went to morning

church, thought of the comforts dispensed to me in this world. To the Giver of all, I offer up my praise, thanks, and blessings. What is man, that He should be mindful of him? Let me deserve, or try to deserve, at least, some of the good which I so largely enjoy!

November 8th.—Began my day with the rehearsal of Iago, in which I had to encounter and try to fortify myself against the prospect of an imperfect Roderigo, the gentleman only having received the part the morning before or late the previous evening. This is most shameful. Dined at the Garrick Club, where I saw Fladgate and Harley; returning, met Knowles and Mr. Weekes, an actor whom I did not at all recollect. Wrote to Catherine and had a visit from Ellen, and one from Dow, who sat long, too long for the necessary self-possession and nerve of Iago. I must be resolute, when I have important characters on my mind, and must refuse to expend either spirits, thought, or voice in idle conversation.

November 9th.—Rehearsed 'Jane Shore' without Dumont or Ratcliffe, in order to regenerate the drama. Dined at Garrick Club, saw the papers which gave me certainly not less commendation than I merited in Iago, if indeed they did not give me more; but I was knocked up. Sent Colonel Birch orders and wrote to dear Catherine. Forster called, whom I have real pleasure in seeing. I acted Lord Hastings well—really well; I almost satisfied myself; a little more truth in part of the last scene would have made it a very commendable performance. I looked at a dress for Hamlet, and read part of it when I reached home. Received a note from Mrs. Fouche about a suit of chain armour.

November 10th.—After thinking over part of Hamlet in bed, I rose rather late, and busied myself for some time in indispensable duties connected with my theatrical toilet. Noted down my accounts and began the reading of Hamlet, which I persisted in, though often obliged to sit down from pain in my back, until six o'clock. Answered Mrs. Fouche's letter about the Polish armour. Dined at the Garrick Club, and looked at all the papers except the *Age*, which I expected would abuse me. Came home after coffee to resume my reading of Hamlet, about which I am most anxious and anticipate disappointment.

November 15*th.*—Read what I could of Hamlet, for all my day was occupied in watching over and trying to administer to the wants of my beloved Catherine. I began Hamlet very languidly; my spirits were low, and my mind not in the part. I felt the absence of what the French justly term inspiration; but in the middle of the second act, I rallied, and asserted myself through the remainder of the play, acting the advice to players and some passages better than on Monday.

November 16*th.*—Went to the theatre about my dress for Antony, which I persisted, after evasion and delay, in seeing. Was disgusted with the ignorant impertinence of Mr. —— informing me that, "because he studied his parts at so short a notice, I might also do the same." Called at hairdresser's, and at the Garrick Club, where I saw the papers, and railed (query, wisely?) at the state of things. Read Plutarch's 'Life of Antony,' and then gave a careful reading to the part itself, which is long, and I fear not effective.

London, November 18*th.*—Came to town by *Billings.* Henry Smith, Dr. Lardner, and Wallace, called, but I felt myself very unequal to conversation, very hoarse and much fatigued. Acted Werner as well as I could against my illness. Made several strong effects by management and taking time—the great secret. My indisposition was so manifest, that Mr. Cooper sent over for Mr. Bunn, counselling him not to keep me in the bills for the morrow. Mr. Bunn seemed not to think me ill or hoarse, but offered to "shut the theatre, if I wished." I peremptorily declined, and said I was ready to act if able; he decided, it seems, on closing to-morrow. Settled dresses for Antony, of which nothing was allowed to be new but a cloak.

November 19*th.*—Went to rehearsal of Antony, which was in a very backward state, and mounted with very inappropriate scenery, though beautifully painted by Stanfield. Earle called to see me, said I ought to lay by for several days, and forbade me to play on the morrow. I reported his words to Cooper, and left the rehearsal at quarter before five. Wallace called, and Cooper sent a note from Bunn requiring, "for the satisfaction of the public," Earle's certificate. On Henry's return from Savory and Moore's, I sent him to H. Earle; he kept me in a state of some anxiety, not returning till nearly ten

with a certificate ordering me not to play for "several days;" which I instantly sent, "to Mr. Bunn's satisfaction."

November 20th.—Read Antony through the whole evening, and discovering many things to improve and bring out the effect of the part, though unable from a pain at my heart, impeding my respiration, to practise it. I found that I had just got an insight into the general effect, but had no power of furnishing a correct picture or of making any strong hits.

London, November 21st.—Went to rehearsal, certainly with amended health, but still rather hoarse, not quite free from the pain at the heart, and generally depressed and weak. I remained at the theatre until four o'clock, and protested to Messrs. Willmott and Cooper against the hurried manner in which I was thrust before the public. Mr. Bunn came for a short time and spoke to me about Lear, to which I returned a vague answer, and about "a great go" on which he wished to speak with Stanfield and myself.

November 22nd.—Cooper went with me to see some very beautiful gold coins, among which were several of Antony. At Garrick Club saw Fladgate and spoke to him on the subject of a bust to Mrs. Siddons. Read the newspapers, which were, I thought, very liberal in their strictures on Antony. Acted Antony better to-night than last night, but it is a hasty, unprepared, unfinished performance. Mr. Cooper's report of Mr. Bunn's reply to my proposal was that he asked, "Is Mr. Macready disposed to give up half his salary for that fortnight?"

November 23rd.—H. Earle's answer, desiring me to rest from acting, was brought.

Elstree, Sunday, November 24th.—Began a letter to Cooper, which I found too long. Read prayers to my family. Wrote a letter to Cooper tendering, through him, the resignation of my engagement and offering a premium for it.

November 25th.—It occurred to me last night in going to bed, and again this morning, that I had omitted the notice of an important fact in my letter to Mr. Cooper, which I accordingly held back and rewrote. My dear Catherine is something better to-day, but does not enable me to dismiss my anxiety on her account. I walked round the garden and through the

yard, enjoying the free breath of Heaven over herb and tree. This letter to Cooper, involving much, occupied my thoughts for most of the morning; in case either of acceptance or refusal it places me better than I am, at least I think so—hope so.

November 27th.—After a night in which I was called up very frequently by my darling Nina's illness, I was awoke in the morning by letters from Messrs. Bunn and Cooper. Mr. Cooper's informing me that Mr. Bunn would reply to my proposal; and Mr. Bunn, taking up a very friendly tone, saying nothing in extenuation of his annoyance to me, but promising that in future my wishes should be consulted, at the same time refusing to relinquish my engagement. On getting up, I applied myself to answer him, which I did—not very satisfactorily to myself, but mildly and in a temper rather inclining to smooth asperities.

November 28th.—Read some passages in the Roman history (to me as fascinating or perhaps much more so than the best romance) embracing the war of the pirates, that of Mithridates with Lucullus and its conclusion by Pompey, who seems to have been far from an unexceptionable character. Mr. Rogers called and saw dear Nina. I returned to my diary and history. I also looked over Otway's works, but saw nothing in them that tempted me to sit down and read.

November 29th.—Looked over the 'City Madam' and could not find cause for Gifford's reprehension of Sir J. B. Burgess's alteration of the play; his language is not equal to the racy vigour of a Massinger, but his alteration of the play, reducing it to probability, is I think judicious, though timid and sometimes feeble.

November 30th.—I sat down to look through and mark available passages in the 'City Madam' for a revision of 'Riches,' which I propose to cut into three acts. I purposed walking out with the dogs to Mr. Fowler's; but the thought of saving our servants' labour induced me to dine with the children, and forego my exercise. After dinner I continued to think of Luke, until I fell asleep.

December 1st.—The news which letters conveyed to me this morning from the papers, was the death of my old master Dr. Wooll. I really regret him, he was kind, most hospitable, ready to enjoy and delighted to look upon enjoyment, in short

of a most benevolent disposition; this made the weaknesses of his character, his vanity and French-abbé-like manner less unamiable. He had little or no pretensions to profound learning, but he was a thoroughly good-natured, kind-hearted man.

London, December 2nd.—At the theatre I began Antony very feebly, but rallied and acted parts of it better than I had yet done. I learned from Cooper that 'Sardanapalus' was to be done with a grand scene, the proposal I made in the beginning of the season to Reynolds! This I take it is the "great go!"

December 3rd.—Walked with Harley to Garrick Club; saw Raymond, &c.; they said Sheil was suspected to be the traitor spoken of by Hill.* Called on Mr. Lough; liked his simplicity and enthusiasm much, but do not admire his last work of the Centaurs and Lapithæ; liked his family. Read the first act of 'Virginius,' which I ought to have attended to before.

December 4th.—Dear Letitia's birthday. May God bless her and send her many happy ones! At rehearsal I gave much trouble in putting the play on the stage, as it was originally got up by me. I fear I incurred much remark and ill-will. I am sorry for it. At Garrick Club, where I dined, I chatted with Collins on the drama, and with Bartley on the subject of my late correspondence with Mr. Bunn—he saw my first letter and thought it a most temperate and straightforward one. I sent Smith orders in answer to his note and went to bed, so very tired and weak was I. Looked at the part of Sardanapalus, which Mr. Cooper had given me with "Mr. Bunn's best compliments." Acted Virginius, not to my satisfaction; was tame and inefficient in the early part, but warmed with the progress of the play and was myself in the two last acts.

* Mr. Matthew Davenport Hill, M.P. for Hull, in a speech to his constituents, made at this time, stated that an Irish member, who spoke violently against the Coercion Bill, had, in private, advised the Government not to relax any of its provisions, and asked, "Who is the traitor?" On the 5th of February, 1834, Mr. O'Connell called the attention of the House of Commons to the subject, and, on behalf of the Irish members, asked for an explanation. Lord Althorp, then leading the House of Commons, declined to assure Mr. Sheil that he was not the member intended; a duel seemed impending, and they were both put in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Sheil was afterwards cleared of the suspicions raised against him, by a Select Committee appointed to report upon the matter.—Ed.

Elstree, December 5th.—Read through the part of Sardanapalus, which I think (but had better not say) is injudiciously cut. Dined at Garrick Club, and looked at some of the magazines. A criticism in the *New Monthly*, finding fault with a passage in my Jaques pleased me much from its truth and good taste. Came home, and read King John, after looking over the parts of Shakespeare for one to excite attention in. I fear it is not to be done but by slow degrees, and "while the grass grows," &c. Looked at parts of Coriolanus.

London, December 6th.—Only rose to attend the rehearsal of King John, to which, if I wish to act well, I must give much of to-morrow; for I am not master in execution of my own wishes and conceptions of the part, which I ought to act grandly. At the Garrick Club, where I dined and saw papers, I took advertisement of servants and sent for one on coming home; she did not come. I looked after my John's dress, and received a letter of thanks for Virginius. Brewster called; ordered wig for Coriolanus: if the public choose to be pleased, I will spare no pains nor expense to please them. Sheil is in a predicament; I would counsel him to fight, but that I do not like to incur the possible consequences of reflection. Acted leisurely, without inspiration or perspiration; still, I seemed to produce an effect upon the audience, but I was not identified with Werner. "Je n'étais pas le personnage." Lost my temper (oh, fool!) about an interference with my order for King John's dress.

Elstree, December 7th.—Rose at a very early hour with perfect pleasure to return home by the *Crown Prince* coach; endeavoured on my way to keep my thoughts on King John, but they ludicrously mixed themselves with other subjects and lulled me into invincible slumbers. Arriving on a very rainy and tempestuous day, I found my darling Nina better, but very thin, and dearest Willie better, but fretful and not quite well. After breakfast I read, with a desire of improvement, King John, and remained in the drawing-room (coming down only twice for short periods) until past four o'clock. I then took up 'Sardanapalus,' which I read, comparing it with the original, and marking my book by it—I do not think, with whatever adjuncts, that it can do; it seems to me very undramatically prepared; and most injudiciously have the selections of its poetry been made. After dinner (what with

a yule log, and good port wine, I enjoyed my fireside) I returned to my tiresome task of collating 'Sardanapalus.'

London, December 9th.—Came to town by *Billings*, and went to rehearsal, at which there was no Hubert: an unusual and not very pleasant occurrence. From the theatre went to dine and see the papers at the Garrick Club. Returning to chambers, wrote notes and was a good deal disturbed by loss of temper as well as time (a loss attributable only to my own folly) on the subject of my armour for King John. I went to the theatre thinking, first, of my dress and, secondly, of King John. I am ashamed, grieved, and distressed to acknowledge the truth: I acted disgracefully, worse than I have done for years; I shall shrink from looking into a newspaper to-morrow, for I deserve all that can be said in censure of me. I did what I feared I should do, sacrificed my character to my dress! Wallace and Talfourd came into my room, and I felt what they thought of my performance; it has made me very unhappy.

December 10th.—I feared to look into the papers, but found them, on going to meet Fladgate by appointment at the Garrick Club very indulgent indeed. The *Herald* remarked, in objection, upon my dress, so that I suffered as I ought, but not in the degree I merited. Went with Fladgate to call on Chantrey, who received us very kindly, and with whom we had a most interesting conversation. Our purpose was to ascertain his price for a bust of Mrs. Siddons, to be placed in Westminster Abbey by the Garrick Club. He told us two hundred guineas, but that the price should be no obstacle; he spoke most pleasingly and liberally. Fladgate was delighted with him. On leaving him to inquire, at his request, of Deville if he had a cast of Mrs. Siddons, we arranged our plan of operations, viz., to learn all, ask the practicability of the plan, and then at a "house-dinner" engage members of the Club to support it. We went to Deville's, saw the casts of Siddons, Miss O'Neill, &c. I was very much gratified with Chantrey's conversation. He observed that, to satisfy relations or friends, it was desirable that the likeness of a bust should be as exact as possible, but that in the case of a person of genius, we must have something to engage the attention and respect of those who could never be able to judge of a likeness. His remarks on the necessity of supplying the want of colours by shadows

pleased me much: that if he copied exactly a face, as it actually was, it would neither have effect nor resemblance; but that he was obliged to vary, always with due caution and care, the exact surface, giving prominence where shadows might be needful to give the corresponding effect to colour.

December 13th.—I acted Hotspur in a way that showed me my ability to play it much better, and indeed very well. I took more time over the opening speech, but found as I proceeded the want of study, and how very little pains would make it good. I also found in the progress of the scene the vast benefit derived from keeping vehemence and effort out of passion. It is every thing for nature. The reading the letter was not bad chiefly on that account. At home I looked through the leaves of Victor Hugo's play.

December 14th.—Awoke late, and got up in great haste to dress for rehearsal. Was there in time; saw the play, 'Coriolanus,' in so disgraceful a state, that it was useless to bestow a word upon the *mise en scène:* had not even the power to try myself in the feeling of the part. After rehearsal went to pay in some money at Ransom's, and called at the Garrick Club.

Elstree, December 15th.—Dow called while I was looking through Shakespeare's 'Julius Cæsar,' with an eye to its *mise en scène.* On his departure I walked round the garden and then read the 'Coriolanus' of Plutarch. After dinner read the part of Coriolanus, and afterwards answered a tax-collector's charge of £2 8*s.* for armorial bearings.

December 16th.—Called at Brewster's, and was disappointed in my wig. Walked to Garrick Club, where I saw newspapers, Winston, and took down a servant's advertisement. Came home, and sent notes after servants and wrote to H. Smith about to-morrow. Dozed through the afternoon.

London.—H. Earle called to see Nina; a note from H. Smith with directions for his money to-morrow. Acted languidly and ineffectively most of the two first acts of 'Coriolanus,' but in the third act I assumed the character, and in the last blazed out; the audience were much excited. Wallace came into my room, and said it was splendid.

December 17th.—Awoke in the night by my dear child's illness, which begins to make me very uneasy. May God

Almighty restore her to her former health and spirits. In bed I read four acts of 'Sardanapalus,' and immediately on rising went to Ransom's, where I got £999, proceeding with it to H. Smith's, where I met Lord H——, a gentlemanly, farmer-looking person, and paid in £999 10*s.*, insuring his life at £57 for an annuity of £135. Afterwards read at the Garrick Club some favourable notices, especially that of the *Chronicle*, on my last night's performance. Read through the character of Luke, and looked through the play previous to arrangement, which I began this evening. Two Cambridge men, Macaulay's friends, importuned me for leave to go behind Covent Garden scenes. I wrote to say that I had no power. Dearest Nina seems better to-night. Tried to reconcile a disagreement between my own and my banker's account which perplexes me. Read the last act of 'Sardanapalus,' which does not improve upon me. Read part of 'Julius Cæsar.'

December 18*th.*—Again passed a very disturbed night, and in the morning lay late in bed ruminating on the character of Luke and the general effect of the play. I am in doubt whether I should be justified before an English audience in substituting the truth of Massinger for the trashy uncharacteristic rant of Sir J. Burges. Intended my first business to be a call on Forster, whose arrival here anticipated me; after some conversation walked out with him to call on Mason, and came round by the Garrick Club, where I dined and looked at papers. At the theatre I found a note from Kenneth, overtures from Bath. I acted William Tell tolerably well. Forster called for me in a coach with Talfourd and Procter. I met at his lodgings Blanchard, a pleasing man, Abbott, Knowles and others. A pleasant but too indulging evening; toasts and commendations flying about. A great deal of heart, and when that is uppermost the head is generally subjected. Procter is to send his play.

December 19*th.*—Forster called to bring my cloak, which I had left last night, and my pocket handkerchief which Knowles in jest had taken from me unperceived. Read through 'Coriolanus,' which I am very anxious to make a part of, but fear the uninteresting nature of the story and the recollection of Kemble are objections too strong to overcome. Made calculations on the various proposals from Dublin, in reference

also to my future country excursions and my general income, which occupied me some time, and wrote thereon a long letter to Calcraft.

December 20th.—Called at the theatre and spoke to Mr. Cooper about Colonel D'Aguilar's 'Fiesco,' and my own absence. Spoke to Kenneth about Bath and Newcastle. Dined at the Garrick and read the article on Sheil. I look upon him as lost for want of discretion in involving himself, and want of firmness to extricate himself. Wrote invitations to Stanfield and Abbott. Wallace called. Note of excuse from Stanfield. Acted Coriolanus not so well as on Monday; the scene with Volumnia, much better, but gave too much voice to some speeches in the last scene, chiefly through that pleasant actor, Aufidius, purposely disconcerting me.

December 21st.—Had a long conversation with Mr. Meadows on the subject of the theatres; spoke to him about a dinner to Dowton, which I requested him to speak to the actors about; told him that I should be glad to see him at Elstree. Read over the two first acts of 'Sardanapalus' in the carriage, which does not improve upon me. Must employ the few days of leisure before me in getting ahead of business, and digesting some plan towards the re-establishment of my profession. How much might be done if opportunity were only in my power!

Elstree, Sunday, December 22nd.—Went to morning service and gave Mr. Chalk £20 to be distributed in coals among the poor. I do not perceive why, with the sentiment I entertain of this, as a religious and moral duty, I should mix myself with persons who have nothing else in common with me. "My order" is an extensive one, that of humanity; and "Homo sum" is my motto, a truly christian sentiment uttered by an heathen poet.

December 23rd.—A disturbed night, in which I tried to think over part of 'Riches,' made me again a late riser. A note, accepting my invitation, came from Dr. Spurgin. On coming down I sent an order to town for the newspapers of this week. Made myself perfect in the first act of 'Sardanapalus,' not a little task. Wrote to a Mr. Holme and Mr. Abrahall about MSS. they wish to send: also a note to Mr. Harris (St. Alban's) about the charge for my armorial bearings. Spent about an hour in the garden under a pelting rain opening the drains;

even with the unpleasant weather, I felt gratification in employing myself again in the garden. Read through attentively an adaptation of Goethe's play of 'Egmont;' unacquainted as I am with the language, and knowing by translation but a very few of Goethe's works, it would be impertinent to hint an opinion on them: all I may say is that I do not feel the power of those I have read. Wrote a note upon the piece to the translator, Mr. Thomas Arnold. Continued my revision and reduction of 'Riches,' which I find a longer task than I expected. The rain has poured without intermission through the day and prevented me from taking the exercise I had intended, but my tasks have engaged and my children amused me.

December 25th.—Wrote an answer to Serle on his application respecting the theatrical monopoly, suggesting, as some security to actors, authors, and the public, a price, graduated according to the quality of the dramatic exhibitions, to be set upon the licence granted. Wallace came in while I was speaking on it to Dow, and opened a furious invective against the plan, contending for universal and unrestricted licence to act the drama in every street.

December 31st.—Serle called, and I had a very long conference with him, as adjourned from yesterday. I could not on re-consideration be a party to throwing open the drama indiscriminately, so ruinous did it appear to me to the general interests of the profession. We at last concurred in the expediency of confining the right of acting the classic drama to the four large theatres of Westminster, restricting its performance elsewhere to a great distance, not including therein the Garrick and Pavilion. I agreed to see Arnold on the subject and Morris; and, if the former entered into our views, to endeavour to move the actors to join in a petition to Parliament.

And now having reached this point of time, the verge of another year, which warns me how rapidly I am nearing the brink of eternity, I turn my thoughts to my God, the Giver of all the good I enjoy, either in external things or in the feelings with which I appreciate them. I bless and praise His sacred name for the undeserved mercies He has showered upon me, and I close this year's record with my humble and fervent prayers for the continuance of His mercy

and many blessings on my dear wife and children and myself, beseeching Him to instil wisdom, virtue and love into our hearts, and make us merit as well as enjoy His divine blessings.

[The following literary criticisms on Racine, Voltaire, and Horace are written in at the end of the Diary for 1833:]

'*Bajazet.*'—The continual uncertainty of the events in this tragedy alternately exciting the hopes and fears of the audience, and the skill with which the catastrophe is kept concealed until its sudden development, impart an interest to it that rivets the attention and stimulates the curiosity in every scene. There are some very beautiful passages, particularly in Atalide's interview with Bajazet: her character is as delicately drawn as that of Roxane forcibly and truly. The furious love, the jealousy, and conflicting emotions of rage and fondness in this powerful character are depicted with a variety, fidelity, and pathetic effect scarcely inferior to the sufferings and passion of Dido. There are hints in this tragedy for a skilful dramatist to improve on greatly.

The scene in which Roxane forces the secret of Atalide's love from her tortured heart is apt to recall, perhaps merely from the relation of the persons to each other, the experiment made by Mithridate on Monime: where success so triumphantly sanctions the use of means, I believe it is of little importance to detect partial resemblances. Both scenes are excellent, but that of Mithridate excels. The sketch of Acomat is perhaps an exception to the simplicity and natural passion distinguishing the other characters. His sense of his own importance borders on the ludicrous, and his resolution to die reminds us of Dryden's inflated common-places:

> "Mourons, mon cher Osmin, comme un visir; et toi,
> Comme le favori d'un homme tel que moi."

His policy and craft in one scene with Roxane are adroitly displayed, and perhaps to a French ear the mode of expression objected to may not have the same degree of pompous

timidity conveyed by it to minds disciplined in a severe school of thought and diction.

'*Mithridate.*'—Except in the catastrophe, which in 'Bajazet' is quite a surprise, and the cause of further distress, this tragedy is superior to the foregoing. It derives, no doubt, an interest from its very name, which raises our minds to the expectation of a grand and terrible succession of scenes involving the sufferings of the defeated monarch, the jealous lover, and the injured father. The poet, in the narrow circle to which his stage confines him, has given admirable representations of the rival brothers, skilfully contrasted, of the timid Monime whom love alone can lift above her natural gentleness, and of the stern and lofty Mithridate, who stands before us as a worthy foe to Roman supremacy. The development of his plan of conquest to his sons seems only fit to be uttered from a throne, nor less deserving of remark is the fiendish spite of the traitor Pharnace, leaving the sting of his revenge in the disclosure of his brother's passion as he is dragged away. "Il aime aussi la reine, et même en est aimé!" The dissimulation of Mithridate, so prominent a feature in his character, is sustained throughout, though never obtruded nor resorted to for trifling purposes, so that he descends to artifice without lowering the dignity of his demeanour. Our pity is excited by the naked view he gives of his inward torments in the soliloquy:

> "Je ne le croirai point! Vain espoir, qui me flatte!
> Tu ne le crois que trop, malheureux Mithridate!"

And even the respect he loses in our minds by the mean sophistry of his own defence (which would be as well omitted, "S'il n'est digne de moi, le piége est digne d'eux"), is soon regained by the picture he draws of himself, despoiled of his glories, and depressed by his load of years:

> "Jusqu'ici la fortune et la victoire mêmes
> Cachaient mes cheveux blancs sous trente diadèmes:
> Mais ce temps-là n'est plus; je regnais et je fuis;
> Mes ans se sont accrus; mes honneurs sont détruits."

Nothing can be more tragic, should I not say more perfect, than the terrible conclusion of this scene. It excels the famous interview of Philip, Carlos, and Isabella in 'Alfieri,' inasmuch as the tyrant's hatred of his son in the Italian play leaves us no

power of sympathy with him, whilst we cherish pity, respect, and even hope amid our fears of the fury of Mithridate. We see the faces of the tortured monarch and the deluded, startled maid as we read: "Vous l'aimez! Nous nous aimions . . . . Seigneur, vous changez de visage!"

No one will deny the dramatic power of Racine after the perusal of that act. I should quote it as a master-piece of tragic composition. The remainder of the play does not maintain an equal pitch; the scenes which follow are merely declamatory, which, although spirited, passionate, and often poetical, do not bring the actors in form and gesture and in speaking looks palpably before us. We follow the argument with more or less pleasure as the verse is smooth and strong, or languid and harsh, but we read it ourselves as we would a course of reasoning on any scientific question. In such scenes as those of the third act, we are auditors and spectators even while we hold the book in our hands—at least our imaginations are possessed with the view of the action before us.

The events which terminate the play are not raised, by the form in which they are made known to us, above a recital: the death of Mithridate is not without dignity, but can hardly be thought pathetic. The scenes in the fourth act, between Xipharès and Monime, Monime and Mithridate, would be productive of effect in an early period of the play, but in their actual position they affect no more than a well-told tale would do immediately after the sight of some appalling reality. The following verse is one of general application, a sure test of its merit:

> "Vaine erreur des amants, qui, pleins de leurs désirs,
> Voudraient que tout cédât au soin de leurs plaisirs!"

It is in this tragedy the anecdote is told of the actor, always habited in the same garb, after he had declaimed

> "Enfin après un an d'absence tu me revois, Arbate,"

being answered from the *parterre* by

> Avec la même perruque et avec la même cravate!"

Voltaire.—My opinion of Voltaire as a dramatic poet, has been much raised by the works I have lately read. There is much simplicity, much passion, much interest, and truth

of very general application in his 'Nanine;' his characters are well discriminated. La Baronne and Nanine are in admirable relief, and the Count is a noble of nature. How often have I felt the truth of the observation,

> "C'est un danger, c'est peut-être un grand tort
> D'avoir une âme au-dessus de son sort!"

and again,

> "Ce monde-ci n'est qu'une loterie
> De biens, de rangs, de dignités, de droits
> Brigués sans titres, et répandus sans choix.
> Mais la coutume? Eh bien! elle est cruelle;
> Et la Nature eut ses droits avant elle."

'*Oreste.*'—There is great merit in this play, the interest that hangs over the character of Oreste, and the mixed qualities of Clytennestre are the chief sources of the pleasure drawn from it. Iphise is pleasing, if not insipid, and Electra is a vixen, though with grand situations and some grand thoughts. Her agony of parting with the fancied ashes of Oreste is very real, and her invocation of the Furies is truly sublime. The ascribing all the misery of the sufferers to destiny is pushed outrageously far; it reminds one of Candide, and testifies the suspicion of impiety in the part. Is this the language of rational beings?

> "A quel prix, dieux puissants, avons nous reçu l'être?
> N'importe: est-ce à l'esclave à condamner son maître?"

Horace.—Horace can very rarely be read without pleasure or benefit, for it is a service rendered to the mind if either a new truth be implanted in it or if one, already having place there, be strengthened. What gratification there is in finding the subject of a long course of reasoning that may have occupied our minds condensed in one pithy and polished sentence! In the art of life few better preceptors can be found than the penetrating, kindly-hearted Horace. His metaphors, too, are pictures—see his description of the power of wealth and the consequences of its accumulation. (Ode XVI. Lib. 3.) How well contrasted, too, is the "Magnas inter opes inops," and the exclamation, "Importuna tamen pauperies abest"? How well he estimates the blessing of content and the

miserable insatiability of him who wishes for wealth? What is wealth to him that still wants it and never enjoys it?

> "Multa petentibus
> Desunt multa. Bene est, cui deus obtulit
> Parca, quod satis est, manu."

In Milton's 'Paradise Regained,' I find a passage in contempt of wealth, which seems rather more declamatory, and though true in fact, offered in a less convincing form than in Horace's Ode:

> "Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
> The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare, more apt
> To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
> Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise."

1834.

Elstree, January 4th.—Rose very late after a night through which I scarcely slept; but occupied myself with thinking on my present condition in the theatrical profession, and attending to my darling child as she turned in her bed. The necessity of rising still in my profession, and of gaining suffrages to my reputation presented itself so strongly to my mind, that I determined, contrary to my original intention, to offer such benefit as my advice could yield towards the play of 'Sardanapalus,' and to do my best to make the play successful, which notwithstanding, I have no hope of effecting.

January 6th.—After dinner we received the twelfth-cake from London which, as a household superstition, I had ordered. In the evening I read four acts of Serle's play of the 'Spanish Maid,' which I think a pretty, pleasing comedy or play, but do not regard the part of the Duke as beyond that of—if indeed equal to—Sir William Dorrillons: still I think the play too good to be rejected.

London, January 7th.—Rehearsed part of 'Sardanapalus,' which was stopped by a conversation on some suggestions of mine. Mr. —— is a person as capable of directing the *mise en scène* of a play as a man devoid of information, industry, genius, or talent

may be supposed to be. He could not understand the object of what I pointed out as necessary, but wished me to correct the various errors, grammatical as well as dramatical, that fell in my way, which I declined doing, and at length Mr. Bunn ordered the MS. to be sent to my chambers to be cut.

January 9th.—Went to Talfourd's (from whom I had received a note of invitation to supper in the morning) to meet Charles Lamb; met there Price, Forster, Mr. and Mrs. Field (I fancy a Gibraltar judge) Charles Lamb, Moxon the publisher. I noted one odd saying of Lamb's, that "the last breath he drew in he wished might be through a pipe and exhaled in a pun."

January 10th.—At rehearsal ('Sardanapalus') I heard of the great expectations formed of the new play read yesterday, and in the regret I acknowledge to have felt at the intelligence, I afford an evidence of the selfishness which must accompany an actor's professional career. If he is idle, he feels he is, or fears to be lost sight of, and his income suffers in the exaltation of those who "push him from his stool"—"The present eye praises the present object." I say this without any spleen, merely wishing it were otherwise, which perhaps ere long it may be.

January 11th.—At Dr. Spurgin's met a party of seventeen and spent a very pleasant day: the only name I caught was Mr. —— the author; he is agreeable but too conscious of being somebody, and I write this observation reluctantly, because he seemed desirous of being pleased with me. Why is it that in society I so often have the pleasure of receiving marked attention and particular courtesy, and that my acquaintance is so little sought,—so little, as to make me think myself either disagreeable in manner or dull in conversation? Mr. —— followed me and requested my acquaintance.

Canterbury, January 15th.—After rehearsal, walked up to the Cathedral to learn my way there, and was taken by Mr. Dowton to the Philosophical Institution where he had been giving a short course of lectures on Phrenology. The building is very neat; the Museum a very pretty beginning, and its purpose most pleasing to those who wish well to human nature. Came to my Hotel (the Lion) and wrote to Catherine: acted Macbeth in a very inferior manner; there was scarcely even reality, and very often positive affectation. A total absence of that directness of

look, voice, and attitude, that tells to the actor far more truly than the thunders of an audience that he is possessed with his part and must bear his hearers with him. It is certain (I do not write it in extenuation of my own faults) that some of the actors were so attired, and others so inaccurate, that my morning's resolution was blown to Heaven, or worse. When the murderers came on, one was dressed up in an old tattered cloak wrapt around him, no bad garb for Edgar as Mad Tom. I could not look at the audience and was obliged to slur the scene, at any rate my nerves quite failed me. I feel ashamed of the professional relationship between us, I cannot subdue it; and money is bought dearly by the pain I suffer under operations of this sort.

January 16*th.*—Acted Iago very indifferently, indeed the habit of scowling or looking from under my brows, especially when an audience is close upon me, as in a small theatre, is a direct prevention to good acting. I wanted reality and directness, indeed, a revision of the execution of the character, and strict attention to my general style.

London, February 6*th.*—Called on Chantrey and, after a long and very pleasant conversation, left him to proceed on his recommendation to endeavour to influence individually the Dean and Chapter of Westminster to remit the fees for a monument to Mrs. Siddons. He questioned us on our views of the description of monument, in which we were disposed to defer to his judgment. He observed that such a record of a great and interesting person should afford posterity the means of knowing and feeling something of the character of the individuals through a portrait which would impart some sentiment in its elevated expression, and that could only be done by a high relief, a bust, or a statue. As to any allegorical device he was *toto cœlo* opposed to it. He referred to his communication with the committee for Wilberforce's monument, who had voted £500 for that purpose, quite forgetting the fees, nearly half that sum, to the Dean and Chapter. Chantrey read his letters to, Gally Knight, in which he recommended, upon the hospital, college, or whatever the subscription should be appropriated to a slab inscribed with Wilberforce's name and claims to the honour of giving a title to such an institution, but deprecating any paltry record in Westminster Abbey, where it would teach

no lesson and attract no attention; or, if any monument were placed there, he advised a statue, concealing his deformity, but bearing in its expression indications of those great qualities which had distinguished him. If desirable, let there be a bas-relief upon his pedestal representing his giving freedom to the negroes. He denounced allegory without reservation; take the wings from Victory and what is she? In young Bacon's monument of Sir John Moore, he told us, a stout fellow representing Valour was lowering the feet of the dead hero, and a winged Victory letting down by a wreath under the arms the body into the grave: i.e., Valour and Victory burying Sir John Moore. When Valour is represented digging a grave, put him on a soldier's jacket, and he becomes a pioneer. His account of his employment by the Committee of Taste showed what such committees are, yet Sir George Beaumont was on this referred to, but had honesty enough eventually to confess himself in error. Chantrey never would send in a sketch, or submit to their criticism. He would not allegorise and therefore he was vulgar and unpoetical. I asked him if he did not value highly, in comparison with himself, his statue of Washington? he said he did, and I observed to him how strongly the simple dignity of the figure, and the happy union of the military and civil characters had impressed themselves on my memory. He said that he had been most anxious about it, and as the order had been transmitted to him through Mr. West he thought it only a due compliment to him, as an American and President of our Academy, to consult him upon it. In consequence, he called on him and requested that he would sketch a design for the statue. West promised that he would. Six years elapsed, during which Chantrey had often urged and as often been answered by the old man, that "he was thinking of it—that it was a difficult subject." At last, having heard that he was ill, Chantrey went, determined to press him upon the subject. He found him so much weakened, that he evidently had not a fortnight to live, and yet the old man was indulging in dreamy hopes and intentions of completing pictures on a scale far beyond anything he had ever yet attempted. Chantrey pressed him on the design for Washington's statue. "Why, sir, I am thinking of it; I have thought a great deal about it, but it is very difficult." Chantrey clearly perceiving this to be the

last opportunity he should ever have of learning his views, requested some intimation of the idea that had presented itself to him. "Why, sir," said West, "I intended representing him with one hand laying down the sword, and with the other taking up the ploughshare." "This satisfied me," said Chantrey, "as to my hopes of assistance from him; and six days after I left him I heard of his death."

The impossibility of distinguishing which hand was in the act of laying down and which of taking up was directly apparent; but Chantrey gave an instance of it, which I do not wish to forget. Horne Tooke, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, told him that when his book, the 'Diversions of Purley,' was coming out, Cipriani offered to make the design for a frontispiece, and Bartolozzi to engrave it; Horne Tooke accepting the offers, mentioned the subject he wished—Mercury putting off his winged sandals. The piece was completed and sent to Horne Tooke, who could not distinguish the precise action of the figure, who, instead of taking off, seemed to him to be putting his sandals on.

I questioned him on the applicability of sculpture to subjects of such extent as precluded the power of taking in the whole at a *coup d'œil*, in reference to Lough's group of the Centaurs and Lapithæ. He at once pronounced against it, or against more than one figure except where combination is necessary to explain and strengthen the sentiment of part. He instanced the Niobe, and, our conversation rambling to the Laocoon, an exception to the general rule against action in statues laid down by Chantrey, he called on us to note that the attitude of the Laocoon, though one of active and agonizing pain, was still one of ease, and sitting down he threw himself into the attitude of a man yawning, which exactly corresponded with the figure of the Laocoon before us.

Went to Mr. Warren's—met two or three pretty, agreeable women. Mr. Holt,* Bencher, Mr. Malins,† Perry,‡ Smith, who had just published a tragedy, Dr. Spurgin and others, not

* Francis Ludlow Holt, of the Northern circuit, and Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.—Ed.

† Afterwards M.P. for Wallingford and now a Vice-Chancellor.—Ed.

‡ Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and for some time Principal Secretary to Lord Lyndhurst, when Chancellor.—Ed.

omitting a very interesting man, Mr. Walpole,* who came in after dinner. Mr. Holt introduced a discussion of Homer and Greek during dinner, which drew a common line of Homer from me, and gained me very undeserved credit for my general knowledge of the poet. A long discussion on religion, in which I was opposed by all the remaining party, kept me there till half-past one, as I did not choose to leave my character behind me. I walked home with Mr. Walpole, whom I liked much.

February 7th.—Called on Wallace† to learn his feeling on Sheil's affair. He was in the House on Wednesday night, and told me that Sheil behaved well; that he had seen him on the previous day, dissuaded him from allowing O'Connell to interfere, and gained his assurance that he would stand forward and vindicate himself; at the same time Wallace turned him from his first intention of speaking on the address. All this good counsel was neutralised by Sheil's want of firmness and judgment to resist the offer of O'Connell's interference, and Wallace's plan was abandoned for the less direct one of O'Connell's leading. Nothing could be more frank than the testimony Wallace bore to the unaffected cheerfulness with which Sheil consented to place himself in his hands, and go to any necessary extremities. I was greatly relieved by this, and in hearing Wallace's confident expectation that he would come triumphantly out of the inquiry. At Warren's yesterday he was spoken of more respectfully than I had anticipated, but my own anxiety for him blinded me to his actual position. Wallace said that the two men who showed the most generous and friendly spirit to Sheil were Sir H. Hardinge and Sir Robert Peel.

February 8th.—Thought over the most likely among my plays to be attractive in the country, and wrote to Calcraft and Clarke applying to both of them in behalf of Mrs. Fosbrooke. Read Mr. Pemberton's criticism on my performance of King John, which is certainly, in reference to that particular representation, if not generally, too eulogistic; his exception to the early part of the first scene with Hubert, as being expressive

* The Right Honourable Spencer Walpole, M.P. for Cambridge University. —Ed.

† Mr. Wallace was a well-known contributor to the London press. He wrote part of the History of England in Lardner's 'Cyclopædia.'—Ed.

of physical terror, was very just. Planted four trees on the lawn, which I fear will not long outlive their settlement. Read the preface to Nicolas's 'Chronology of History,' which opened my eyes to some important principles of that science. Walked round the garden playing with my dear children. Mrs. Chalk and her mother called, and sat some time. Mrs. Chalk applied to us respecting the clothing fund, to which we of course assented.

February 13*th.*—On going to my study I looked over the towns that seemed likely to afford me employment in the summer, and thought over some plans for profit which do not promise much; one was the Birmingham Theatre, but the recollection of this being the oratorio year, and the opening of the new Town Hall, obliges me to lay aside any further thought on the subject. In looking at the *Edinburgh Review* the name of S—— arrested me, and I was lead into an inquisition on the cause of my dislike to that man. It is very much owing to his pertness and petulance, something to the quality which is the theme of praise in the review, his skill in debate, which argues subtlety and disingenuousness, such as I have more than once noted in him. It also occurred to me to ask how far it may be referable to that envious impatience of others' progress in life when we feel ourselves stationary? I would not deny the existence of such an unbecoming motive, but I should deprive myself by such confidence of the powers of eradicating what I utterly condemn. Read Review (Edin.) of Miss Aikin's 'Memoirs of Charles I.' We may be mistaken in our ideas of that man's belief of his prerogative's extent; we can have no doubt of his barbarity, injustice, and treachery. What horrid blasphemy is the form of prayer on his martyrdom! Read two party reviews against the Tories, which were too manifestly Whiggish to interest one who would despise any distinctions but those of right and wrong.

February 14*th.*—My valentine was Mr. Bartley, whose letter communicated to me the reluctance of the actors to join in giving a dinner and testimonial to poor old Dowton. For myself this resolution takes much care from me, and renders to me time which I want. So be it. Answered Mr. Bartley's note in a civil and regretful strain, and really I felt regret at the loss of an occasion to gladden the declining years of a

meritorious actor by an acknowledgment from his profession of his worth and talent, and at the obligation pressed upon me of thinking less kindly of the members of my unfortunate profession. I took up Miss Austen's novel of 'Emma,' which engrossed my attention the whole evening.

February 15th.—Finished Miss Austen's 'Emma,' which amused me very much, impressing me with a high opinion of her powers of drawing and sustaining character, though not satisfying me always with the end and aim of her labours. She is successful in painting the ridiculous to the life, and while she makes demands on our patience for the almost intolerable absurdities and tediousness of her well-meaning gossips, she does not recompense us for what we suffer from her conceited and arrogant nuisances by making their vices their punishments. We are not much better, but perhaps a little more prudent for her writings. She does not probe the vices, but lays bare the weaknesses of character; the blemish on the skin, and not the corruption at the heart, is what she examines. Mrs. Brunton's books have a far higher aim; they try to make us better, and it is an addition to previous faults if they do not. The necessity, the comfort, and the elevating influence of piety is continually inculcated throughout her works—which never appear in Miss Austen's.

February 24th.—A letter arrived from Kenney, stating his having heard of my wish to belong to the Athenæum, and that if it were so, he thought it might be accomplished, requesting me at the same time to keep his communication a secret. I answered it, thankfully accepting his good offices if they could procure me admission without a ballot.* The whole of the afternoon was occupied without intermission in replacing my books in the study. After dinner I began Pope's preface to his 'Homer,' but desisted from it to read Fox's speech on the law of libel, which is clear reasoning and I think demonstrative in its effect.

* The name appears in the Candidate's Book of the Athenæum Club, under date of February 28th, 1834: "No. 1029. W. C. Macready. Proposed by James Kenney, seconded by Charles Mayne Young." Macready was elected by the Committee on June 21st, 1838, when forty members, to be so elected, were added to the club by a vote of the Annual Meeting held in May of that year.—Ed.

February 26th.—A note also from Kenney, explanatory of the mode of getting me into the Athenæum, by naming me as a candidate for a yearly nomination. I answered it.

Dublin, March 3rd—Æt. 40. Went to the theatre and, owing to an irregularity in the clocks, was pressed for time in dressing, which quite threw me from my centre. Between the first and second scenes ('Virginius') a ludicrous accident tended to increase my nervousness, but in the second act I laid my fangs upon the audience, and in the third bore them along with me to the end. I acted most of the play with real force and truth. The audience called for me, and seemed pleased in applauding me.

March 13th.—Went to the theatre, and toiled through 'Hamlet' to an audience which I felt, or thought I felt, I amused, but too poor to afford the quantity of applause necessary to sustain one through such a character. I did much well, and heard several half-suppressed attestations of the pleasure I imparted, but I was quite knocked up. When I have a part like Hamlet to play my whole day is absorbed by it. I cannot give my thoughts to any other subject, and am obliged to content myself with thinking I am earning my daily bread.

March 18th.—I acted Werner languidly. A circumstance in the play amused me a good deal, and at my own expense. I was inconvenienced and rather annoyed by Ulric looking on the ground, or anywhere but in my face, as he should have done; my displeasure however vanished on seeing the tears fast trickling down his cheek, and, forgiving his inaccuracy on the score of his sensibility, I continued the scene with augmented energy and feeling, and left it with a very favourable impression of the young man's judgment and warm-heartedness. In the course of the play he accosted me, begging my pardon for his apparent inattention to me, and explaining the cause, viz., that he had painted his face so high on the cheek, that the colour had got into his eyes, and kept them running during the whole act. What an unfortunate disclosure!

Manchester, March 22nd.—Rehearsed 'Coriolanus' and the last act of 'The Critic.' When dressed I scarcely knew how I should get through the work before me, and thought of the peculiarity of this profession, which obliges the sickly frame to dilate itself with heroic energy and the man of sorrows to affect

an immoderate buoyancy of spirits, whilst perhaps his heart is breaking. I was most attentive to the necessity of subduing my voice, and letting the passion rather than the lungs awaken the audience. In consequence I acted well. It is there I fail when I allow my tongue and action to anticipate my thought. I cannot bear this too strongly in mind. Puff I managed with tolerable vivacity and earnestness, and the audience were evidently disposed to be pleased with me. Clarke paid me £91 odd for the week, which made me think most gratefully of the good I receive.

Harrogate, March 23rd.— On walking across the common at Harrogate to my house, the Granby, I thought how exultingly I had first entered it, and how blindly and unresistingly I had been led into the purchase of it.

London, April 10th.— Read 'Sardanapalus' through. Went to the theatre, and rehearsed it. Came to my chambers very much fatigued, and ordered a mutton-chop there. After dining I lay down in bed for an hour. Very reluctantly I rose to go to the theatre, feeling my spirits and strength much exhausted. The play began—and I acted much better than from my over-laboured spirits and strength I could have expected. I was self-possessed, and often very real; the audience were quite prepared to applaud whatever could be interpreted as deserving notice, and my spirits rose to meet their indulgence. In the fifth act I cut a small artery in my thumb against Mr. Cooper's dress, which bedabbled my whole dress as well as Mr. Cooper's and Ellen Tree's, flowing profusely at times, and then spurting out like a spring of water. Was called for by the audience, but was ignorant that no one had been sent on, or I would not have gone forward; in the erroneous belief that Mr. King had been on, whom I heard desired to "give out," I led Ellen Tree forward amid much applause. Returned in the carriage to Elstree. Went to bed quite exhausted.

April 11th.—Took a chaise to town, for I felt quite unequal to walk to Edgware; on the road went over 'Sardanapalus.' On arriving at my chambers, which I did in very good time, I found a letter without signature; the seal was the head of Byron, and in the envelope was a folded sheet with merely the words "Werner, Nov. 1830. Byron, Ravenna, 1821," and "Sardanapalus,

April 10th, 1834." Encircling the name of Byron, &c., was a lock of grey hair fastened by a gold thread, which I am sure was Byron's, and which I have no doubt was sent to me by his sister, Mrs. Leigh: it surprised and pleased me. I went to the Garrick Club to read the newspapers, which were all very favourable to me, and to dine—saw Collier, Taylor, Bartley, and several others. I fear I carried the effort at modesty, which the pride of success puts on, upon my deportment, but it was against my will if it was so. On my way there Kenney called to me, congratulated me on Werner, and acquainted me with the circumstances of the introduction of my name at the Athenæum—that if not elected this year I should be next, or if driven to a ballot (to which I would not consent to go) I should be sure of success. Came here very much tired—tried to read 'Sardanapalus.' Went to the theatre, and acted very feebly—every one seemed unstrung and languid from the effects of the preceding evening.

April 12th.—Forster came in, bringing for Catherine extracts, cut out by him, from all the papers, on 'Sardanapalus.' When he had left me, I read over 'Sardanapalus,' and went to the theatre. I acted with considerable spirit, and much more effectively than last night—still I think the play will not be attractive.

Sunday, April 13th.—Went to afternoon service—was struck with the second lesson, the second chapter of the General Epistle of James. How clergymen can read that chapter from the pulpit and pay the homage they do to wealth and power, and call themselves ministers of Christ's religion they best know: to me their conduct is a reason for their unpopularity. Walked round the garden, which is always a pleasure to me. Played with my darling children while dressing for dinner. Read prayers to the family, and felt truly grateful to God for His great and many blessings.

April 16th.—I looked into Crabbe's life. Lay down for about half-an-hour and read part of 'Sardanapalus.' I acted, I know not how; I went prepared and anxious to play well, but I cannot work myself into reality in this part—I have not freedom enough to satisfy myself. Miss Tree and self nearly singed in the last scene.

April 17th.—Read 'Sardanapalus.' Acted it with much more spirit in the four first acts than heretofore, but did not satisfy myself in many things in Act 5—my manner was too constrained.

I wanted reality. Mr. Bunn asked me if I would act Joseph Surface on the King's command. I declined; I am out of the character, and it is tempting further solicitation voluntarily to commit myself to it again. The King cares for neither the play, nor the actors, nor their art, and I see no reason why I should inconvenience myself for him.

April 23*rd.*—Shakespeare's birthday. Acted 'Sardanapalus.' After the play, dressed, and went to the Garrick Club, where I took coffee, and was looking at the *Quarterly Review* on the 'Modern French Drama,' when I was joined by Talfourd, Forster, White, and others. I found our private supper, which was to have consisted of eight or ten, swelled into a greater number, and many of the guests strangers to me. Talfourd was placed in the Chair, and in the course of the evening made some very good speeches. My health was the third toast from the Chair, and toasting, as applied to me, such a compliment may well be called, for I curl and shrink under the operation as much as if I underwent literally the process of being brought to the stake. Under the fervency of Talfourd's panegyric I might employ Shakespeare's words, "Beneath this fire do I shrink up." I met Mr. Hayward, to whom I was introduced, and who gave me his card, promising to send me his translation of 'Faust.' It was to me a very pleasant evening. Reached home quarter-past three.

April 24*th.*—Looked into the 'Foscari' of Byron. I am of opinion that it is not dramatic—the slow, almost imperceptible progress of the action, and the strain required from our belief to sympathise with the love of home in Jacopo, will prevent, I think, its success in representation. I was interested by the coincidence of two men's fortunes depending on a casualty to which they voluntarily submitted the course of their destinies. Robert Bruce hung the determination of his future course upon the strength of a spider's web; and Francisco Sforza threw the future chances of his life with his mattock upon an oak: when asked to enlist, "Let me throw my mattock upon that oak," he said, "if it remains there I will." It remained, and he enlisted, from a peasant becoming soldier, general, prince.

May 2*nd.*—Hurried out to my appointment at Canning's statue with Fladgate at twelve; met him there and called with him on Dr. Ireland, the Dean of Westminster, on the subject of the fees for Mrs. Siddons' monument; found him a very

gentlemanly and pleasant person; he promised to send me an account of the expense, which should be as low as he could make it. On leaving him, we went over Westminster Abbey, and I saw the sorry affair they have placed to Kemble. What a contrast to that living piece of marble that keeps for ever alive the person and personal character of Horner by Chantrey.

May 3rd.—Some doubts which rose in my mind on the propriety of trying Lear were overruled by the seeming necessity of making some effort, and also of not leaving a character now not performed for three or four seasons, to the chance of an actor like ——. This weighed strongly with me. Acted Sardanapalus as if a millstone were about my neck—I could not divest myself of the weary sensations I felt. Read an anonymous letter about my shabby dress—well deserved. Came home; headache and fatigue. Sat down to proceed with Lear, of which I marked a great deal.

May 4th.—I settled my accounts, and set at once to work on the cutting, and then marking fairly the copy of Lear, a task to which I assigned about two hours, which had cost me seven or eight: I have finished it and I humbly hope for a blessing on my work. Made it in a parcel for Cooper and sent it to him. Dressed and went out to dine with Hayward.

May 5th.—I awoke very early this morning with the heat of the atmosphere, and my own excited system; was kept awake by a sort of horror that possessed me on thinking that *tapis* was a Latin word, and that I had used it as a French one. It is ludicrous to remember how much I suffered from this fancy, and how my silly pride attempted to set me at ease. I could not sleep, so read over some observations I had written for Catherine on Burke's 'Sublime,' and some of the thirteenth book of the 'Iliad.' Went to Colnaghi's—looked at costume. Fixed on Lear's dress.

May 6th.—Thought on Lear as I waited for the coach, and came pleasantly on the outside to Elstree, where I found the trees in full leaf, as if magic had been at work on our little domain; my beloved family all well. Walked round the garden with a feeling of its quiet and comfort that will not bear translation. After breakfast resumed my promenade, and afterwards noted down some memoranda and decided on Lear's dress, &c.

Looked through prints for a head, but found none affording more information than I already possessed.

May 7th.—Went to the theatre. Desperate as to my prospect of getting through the play, but by acting with collectedness and presence of mind, and imposing earnestness through the performance, I made a much better Macbeth than I could have calculated upon. I was more than ordinarily fortunate in the soliloquy upon the commission of the murder, and upon the death of the queen, also with the murderers. My reception of the news of Birnam Wood was correct, but my last scene was marred by my antagonist. Altogether I got through well enough to have satisfied myself, and so well that I do not conceive I have any excuse left for the ill-temper I manifested towards two persons, Mr. —— and Mrs. ——, whom I ought not to have noticed except in a kindly spirit. I hope to amend this foolish, undeniable fault.

May 8th.—Forster called and accompanied me to Oxford Street; at Tavener's I selected the materials for my dress, and at Major's chose the fur, ordered belt and fillet at Gass's, bought gloves at Everingham's. Went to Garrick Club, where I dined.

May 10th.—Wrote a French note (which tasked my memory) to Grisi, inquiring her charge for a song, and went to rehearsal of 'Lear.' Returning to chambers, wrote another French note to Paganini on the same subject as to Grisi. Wrote a note on benefit matters to Madame Vestris, who unluckily is on the continent. Acted Sardanapalus pretty well to a miserable house—two persons in the second gallery at the opening! From the frequent and almost uninterrupted repetition of this play I feel myself relapsing into my old habitual sin of striving for effect by dint of muscular exertion, and not restraining my body, while my face and voice alone are allowed to act. It is of the utmost importance to be on my guard against this vicious habit. Came home under a beautiful starlight night which reminded me of the sweet nights I have travelled in Italy. Came home in an hour and a half, and found Letitia sitting up for me.

Elstree, Sunday, May 18th.—Read prayers to the family, and afterwards read over the latter part of Lear, which requires both more practice and thought than I shall have time to give. I must husband what is left to me, and trust to the goodness

which has hitherto befriended me to strengthen and assist me in this important trial.

London, May 20th.—Messrs. Twinings, the most gentlemanly merchants in London, sent to me for tickets, as did Mr. Gass, receiving the order for the alteration of the zone for Lear. Went to the theatre about my dress, which was, as usual, deferred. Called at Garrick Club, where I looked at newspapers and dined; listened to some edifying conversation on dishes and dinners; and lounged away much time in the library and drawing-room, looking over Trusler's Hogarth, opening some books and turning over the leaves of some periodicals. Got into conversation with Mr. Barham, who came out with me and walked to Drury Lane.

May 22nd.—Letter from Mr. Powell about the Granby, and an invitation, which is very complimentarily worded, but which I do not quite understand, from the Literary Fund Society.

May 23rd.—Benefit. 'King Lear,' first time, and 'Lord of the Manor.' Rose in good time with the impression that the day was one of serious results to me. Sent tickets to the *Literary Gazette*, *Athenæum*, and *Sunday Times;* I justified myself in my experiment in the reflection that, otherwise, I should leave unbroken ground to an adventurer, who might work it to my disadvantage. Rehearsed, I should say, exceedingly well, giving great promise for the night. Miss Kenneth wishing to see the play, and Cooper's confidence in its going well, were all the indications of approval I could pick out from the company. Arranged my dresses, and kept a strong check upon myself, not permitting anything like an ebullition of discontent or violence. Returned to my chambers; settled all that was necessary for the night; dined and went to bed at ten minutes past two, giving orders not to be disturbed. I could not sleep for the state of my mind and the heat. I thought over some of the play.

Went to the theatre; dressed; became excessively nervous; took wine; went on the stage—as nervous as the first night I acted in London, without the overbearing ardour that could free me from the thraldom of my fears. My performance in the two first acts was so unlike my rehearsal that, although I goaded myself to resistance by suggestions of my own

reputation, of my wife and children's claims upon me, still I sunk under the idea that it was a failure. In the third act the audience struck me as being interested and attentive, and in the fourth and fifth they broke out into loud applause; the last scene went tamely, but I was called for by my friends, and went on, was much applauded, and said that, "Gratified as I was by their approbation, I hoped, when relieved from the nervousness of a first appearance, to offer them a representation more worthy their applause."

This is the last of the great characters of Shakespeare that I have left unattempted, and the tone which the press takes up on it will materially influence my after life. I can put no reliance on the partial feelings of friends,—I do not feel that I have yet succeeded, but it is consoling to me to believe that I have not failed. Persons think that we carry the applause of the audience to our pillows, and that the sound still rings as a delightful lullaby in our ears. I have no such pleasure. I wish the night over that I may make up my mind to the impression diffused through the public mind.

May 26th.—Rehearsed Lear at Covent Garden. I acted really well, and felt that my audience were under my sway. I threw away nothing; took time, and yet gave force to all that I had to do; above all, my tears were not those of a woman or a driveller, they really stained a "man's cheeks." In the storm, as indeed throughout, I greatly improved upon the preceding night. I was frantic with passion, and brought up expectation to the dreadful issue of such a conflict. I lost the great effect of "Every inch a king," but will be more careful in future. The scene with Cordelia and the death were both better than the first night. Dow came into my room, and thought me greatly improved throughout.

May 30th.—Called at the Literary Fund office, and saw Mr. Snow, the secretary, who explained, in answer to my inquiries, that nothing but a compliment was intended by the invitation to me, and that they would not even drink my health if it was objectionable to me. I accepted the invitation.

June 6th.—Returned to the subject of to-morrow's dinner, and endeavoured to collect the substance of what I ought to say in answer to the proposal of my health, which I think, as a person before the public, I ought not to shrink from, although I feel

myself so uncertain upon the mode in which I may acquit myself. I could not satisfy myself with sentence after sentence, nor was it until three o'clock that I wrote down, without hiatus, what I thought might do, and then went to rest, jaded and spirit-tired.

June 7th.—Again returned to this annoying and perplexing speech, which would have been most amusing to a looker on—but which, like the frog in the fable, I could truly say was "death to me." My whole day was the speech, not always the whole speech, but certainly nothing but the speech. Returned to my chambers and my eternal and infernal speech, at which I laboured, but so unsuccessfully that, as I was leaving the room to go out, I found on trial every word gone from my mind; an effort at recollection called back to me its substance, and I went along, conning it over, uncertain whether or no to request my health to be omitted. I saw Theodore Hook in the reception-room, and Jerdan, by whom I was presented, a mere matter of form, to the Duke of Somerset; Lord Mulgrave, who chatted a little, as did Villiers, who seemed very ill. Lucien Bonaparte and Tricoupi the Greek minister were also there, and Holman the blind traveller. At dinner I was placed next to Murray, opposite to Captain Marryat, Theodore Hook, to my great surprise, Dick, and near me, Gleig, Lockhart, and, Christie, who reintroduced himself to me. I spent rather a pleasant day, only overshadowed by anticipations of my speech, which like many good and evil anticipations of our life, never came. The Duke left the Chair—I followed. "Parturiunt montes, nascitur *nihil*."

June 21st.—Dined with Talfourd, where I met Hayward, Whitmore, Baines, Price, Forster, and several others of legal note; a very pleasant afternoon.

July 3rd.—Came up to town by *Billing's* and, being alone in the coach, used the opportunity of fastening in my mind the fugitive thoughts which I wished to give utterance to this day. After arriving at my chambers, Mrs. Macready * called, and I arranged with her definitively the Bristol engagement, promising to send her books of 'Sardanapalus' and 'Lear.'

Paid Freeman and Healey, and still repeated and repeated

* His father's widow.—Ed.

what I had to say. Between my speech, the heat, want of exercise and luncheon, I was quite oppressed, and lay down in the hopes that a little sleep would tranquillise my nerves, which were much and painfully excited.

To the very last moment I persisted in thinking over and repeating my speech, and went at last to the dinner at the Garrick Club. Saw Fladgate in the drawing-room, who agreed to bring forward the business of Mrs. Siddons' monument, and I engaged that Talfourd should press it forward. Introduced to Messrs. Thackeray, Graves, Bredel, Maynard, Maitland, Brown, Murphy, Palmer; besides met Talfourd, Price, Forster, J. Smith, White, Simpson, Blood, Willett, and three or four more gentlemen whose names I cannot remember. There was venison, &c., and excellent wines. Talfourd proposed my health with a speech as eloquent as it was kind, which says all for it that truth and admiration can wish to say. I answered it as well as I could with self-possession, but under strong nervous excitement. We had some very good songs from James Smith and Blood, and the evening was very pleasant; Talfourd left us on business with a promise to return. Shortly after Thackeray and one or two others dropped away, and I intimated to Fladgate the necessity of proceeding with our purpose lest our audience should become too diminished. He accordingly broached the subject, which he very shortly transferred to me, and I had to lay before the party my views as to the desire of myself and others, that the club exclusively should have the honour of erecting a monument to that great actress; alluded to the generosity of her character in encouraging merit in obscurity; relating an anecdote of Kean's appearance before her, and of her kind predictions, which I hinted at, of my own success. I mentioned what Fladgate and myself had done in the interviews we had had with Chantrey and the Dean of Westminster, and concluded by hoping that they would not think I wished to dictate to them, but that they would concur with me in thinking that it would confer honour on our Society to carry this object into effect. It was very cordially received, resolutions were passed, and upwards of £50 was voted instantly. Talfourd returned, and was informed of it; he rose to return thanks for his health being drunk, and spoke on the subject of the monument, again adverted to the occasion of the meeting,

and pronounced a most brilliant panegyric upon me. The day passed off most happily, and at twelve, or nearly so, we went into the drawing-room, where I introduced myself to Simpson, and where Bredel introduced himself to me. We talked on the merit of Mrs. Siddons, Kemble, Miss O'Neill, and Kean very agreeably until one o'clock, when I went to my chambers, leaving the few behind to broiled bones and iced champagne. In bed I read short memoirs of Vauban and William III. and went to sleep in great dread of to-morrow's head-ache.

Elstree, July 13th.—Was only just in time for Billing's coach. On my study table stood Mr. Lough's Horses of Duncan in plaster, with a note from him requesting my acceptance of them. I was pleased with the gift itself, and the estimation in which the giver appeared to hold me. A letter also from Lieutenant Maréchaux, 30th Regt., giving me information of the state of the Regiment with respect to purchase, which he wished to have communicated to Edward, who now stands first for purchase of the majority, Poyntz, his senior, having withdrawn his name.

July 15th.—Read several articles in Leigh Hunt's journal, but none that struck me very much; the brief memoir of Henriette de Bourbon, Madame de Montpensier, was the most interesting; particularly her quarrel with her lover, Lauzun. Wrote to Edward, inclosing him Maréchaux's letter, and acknowledging his last remittance. Walked in the garden and wrote in arrears. Began the alteration of the 2nd act of 'The Maid's Tragedy.'

July 16th.—Letter from Bunn, inquiring if I would sign an agreement for next season. Came to town by Bryant, reading four acts of Captain T——'s tragedy on the way: he has talent, and the style of his dialogue is dramatic, but he wants power and invention. Found note from Mrs. Tucker about Miss Allison, which I directly inclosed to Calcraft, and another in a complimentary vein, accompanying a play called 'Orfred from Canterbury.' Wrote to J. Birch to say I would dine with him, and inclosed J. Twiss's order for £20 to Ransom's. Answered Bunn's letter to the effect that the old account should be cleared before another was opened, adding, that I should not be able to open with him.

Called again, as per promise, on Price returning, and found

he had quite forgotten all about Mrs. Siddons' monument; I therefore, at his request, wrote a letter from the members to the committee, which he took charge of. He gave me some very nice sealing-wax, which I carried to my chambers. Went on to Nattali's, where I bought an Herodotus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pope's Homer, Winkelman, Fielding, Vanbrugh, Thompson, Bos, amounting to £9 1*s.*

July 17th.—For many a day I have not felt equal inconvenience and oppressiveness from the heat as I did in getting up this morning, which is perhaps attributable to my *diner gras* of yesterday. I wrote notes to Richardson, appointing, in answer to the request of his card, 3 o'clock to see him about the Granby; to Nattali, with corrected cheque; to Dunn, with extract of Bunn's note and request of the balance; and to Bunn, denying his assertion that any understanding existed between us, and desiring to know whether he wished me to suspend my engagements not concluded, or no. Calcraft called and undertook to see and call upon Miss Allison. He mentioned to me Sir W. de Bathe's offer to him, viz., of being his security for Covent Garden Theatre and lending him £5000. This is very generous.

Went to the National Gallery and looked again at the Correggio—also the study of Ugolino's head and the Horneck. Called at Nichol's about Captain T——'s play, and agreed to send it immediately—saw the portrait of Shakespeare, said to have been painted by Burbage. I think it not unlikely.

Elstree, July 18th.—After a short walk in the garden with the dear children, who, I thank most heartily Almighty God, are much better, I began to arrange the books I had left out of place last night; this occupied some time. I then returned to the alteration of the concluding scene of the second act of 'The Maid's Tragedy,' which I found a much longer task than I had anticipated. Dined early upon a vegetable dinner, which enabled me to return almost immediately to my employment. The rain that poured down through the greater part of the day was most gratefully welcomed; but during the violent thunderstorm in the afternoon our kitchen was inundated with the water pouring down through the roof and breaking in through the floor. After finishing the alteration of the second act, which I think is a very considerable improvement, I returned to the task of

marking and arranging the *mise en scène* of the tragedy, which I completed to within a page or two.

In the afternoon I received a parcel containing a note from Mr. Bunn wishing me to open the theatre and perform Manfred, postponing for that purpose my Dublin engagement. I do not like the thought of this, as I see no chance for the success of 'Manfred'—it is, as I observed, not a monodrame, but a monologue; splendid as the poetry is, it is not at all dramatic. This morning in arranging my books I missed the first volume of 'Tom Jones,' and to-night Letitia found it in Ball's cupboard; this is a liberty which scarcely ought to be passed by—it is very bad.

July 19*th.*—Received a letter from Sheil inclosing franks, and the expression of his regret at not having seen me, and one from Knowles asking me to act Alfred for his benefit on Monday, 28th, at the Victoria Theatre. Came downstairs, and answered Mr. Bunn's letter, exposing the impracticability of my studying Manfred before my visit to Dublin; wrote to Messrs. Powell, requesting their opinion upon the rent of the Granby to Messrs. Richardson and Clunn; inclosed my letter to Maréchaux in the frank, and sent them all in a parcel to be posted and delivered in London. After breakfast sat down to answer Knowles; I confess, though it is a great inconvenience and I feel it rather a descent to play at the Victoria, yet I am gratified in receiving this application from him; it is the best rebuke I can give to his avoidance of me, his coldness to me, and his omission to do me the common justice of contradicting the paragraph in the *Morning Chronicle*, as also the behaviour of his wife and daughter to me. I answered him in the kindest tone, assenting to his wish.

Finished completely the arrangement of 'The Maid's Tragedy' which I think is improved. Began to put 'Sardanapalus' in acting form. While waiting for Calcraft, took up Fielding's 'Amelia,' and was pleased with much of the story, but more with the happy maxims and excellent counsel with which it abounds.

July 21*st.*—My dear daughter Catherine Frances Birch born.*

* Died, and was buried at sea, on her voyage home from Madeira, 24th of March, 1869. She was the author of some very tender and beautiful poems published under the titles of 'Leaves from the Olive Mount,' (1860), 'Cowl

July 22*nd.*—Took an early vegetable dinner, and afterwards read to the end of 'Amelia;' it cannot of course be mentioned with 'Tom Jones,' and there are passages of prosiness, puerility of expression, and occasional coarseness, but there is humour, wit, pathos, character and the justest, most philosophic views of our internal polity. Heard dear Nina her lesson; gave up the greater part of my day to the dull, weary, uninteresting, unimproving task of preparing, by interleaving and marking, a prompt copy of 'Sardanapalus.' Went up occasionally and sat with my dearest Catherine, for whose comfortable state of health, again and again I thank Almighty God.

July 23*rd.*—Letters from Kenneth proposing Worcester to me for August, and from Wallace with congratulations on the dear addition to our numbers. Answered Kenneth immediately in the negative, and then, to do something in the interval before breakfast, walked down to the reservoir with the dogs, where they got a good washing; afterwards went round the garden; the morning was very warm and beautiful after the late rains.

Received a very kind letter of congratulation from Forster, which I answered in its own spirit. After dinner I worked at 'Sardanapalus' until four o'clock, when I heard dear Nina her lesson.

Returned to 'Sardanapalus,' which I at length finished, and with great satisfaction in closing it, at a quarter past 12 o'clock.

July 24*th.*—Found letters from John Birch, congratulating me, and from Calcraft, informing me, that his brother-in-law, but married on Sunday last, had died in thirteen hours of cholera, and that he had his funeral expenses to defray, requesting the loan of £25. Read the newspaper, and think Lord Brougham cannot long continue Chancellor. Visited dear Catherine. Began my professional study and, as an introduc-

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and Cap' (1865), and 'Devotional Lays' (1868). Enjoying a large share of imaginative capacity, she was a person of warm and enthusiastic affection, which was amply returned by those who knew her, and she inherited much of her father's artistic temperament. Her devoted ministrations among the poor during the time of Macready's residence at Cheltenham will be long remembered there.—Ed.

tion and to get my throat in order, read and rehearsed small portions of various characters—among the rest began Melantius. Letter from Powell and Son, Knaresborough, upon letting the Granby. After reading in the drawing-room for something more than two hours, I came down to a vegetable dinner, and afterwards wrote to Calcraft, inclosing him a cheque for £25, and sent him by the *Crown Prince* the marked copy of 'Sardanapalus' requesting him to get it bound for me. Mr. Pope called, and reported very well, thank God, of Catherine and the baby.

Went twice with care over the play of 'Lear' to discover where I could lighten the language of the subordinate parts; was able to effect little further reduction. Began to prepare the book for interleaving, &c.

July 25th.—Coming down, I heard dear Nina her lesson, in which, though with many attempts to control myself, I grew impatient and spoke with temper. This is, without qualification, wrong; it is the business of parents to endure the levity and inattention of these dear creatures, and be contented to assure themselves that a patient repetition of the often forgotten or unheeded precepts, insures for it a permanent place in the memory at last. Children should be lured to knowledge, until its acquisition, like that of meaner gain, creates a passion for its increase. I hope to be more circumspect. Read through Major Cross's play of 'The Cid'—a translation I believe from Lope de Vega—if so, I have no great opinion of the dramatic literature of Spain; the original, I doubt not, contains poetry, high sentiment, and some passion, but is utterly deficient in construction and situation—the climax of action. Gave the rest of my day to the wearying, slow, and unimproving task of preparing my acting copy of 'King Lear,' even to the last hour of evening.

Sunday, July 27th.—Went to afternoon service, where I was made impatient of the unprofitable stuff that is served out to hungry minds from the pulpit—citing the Book of Revelation, and declaring that the commandments were "written on tables of stone by the *finger* of the Almighty." Letitia made a very good observation on this, viz., that churchmen who used such language were not justified in abusing the Roman Catholic artists for introducing as a person, the Incomprehensible

Spirit of Life and Virtue, since their conception of His attributes were equally limited.

July 29th.—Went to Cartwright, who was glad to see me, and whose reputation alone supported my trembling confidence that he would not pull the teeth out of my head. I engaged to revisit his terrible room on this day fortnight, and, after another operation, to dine with him. He has some beautiful specimens of art and interesting curiosities. I forced him to take £5, but he made me promise not to repeat the infliction.

July 30th.—Before I rose I read the first part of 'Philip Van Artevelde,' which I had begun last night, and laid down a little before those kind of southern rains came pouring out of the heavens like thunder on the deep rush of the wind—it was indeed *densissimus imber*. This dramatic poem, 'Van Artevelde,' pleased me very much: profound thought displayed in the happiest adornings of fancy, and excellent ideas of discriminated character, if the persons are not sufficiently individualised by their language. The description of Ukenheim and his dead children affected me very much—I am greatly pleased with what I have read.

July 31st.—At about half-past five I took up the second volume of 'Philip Van Artevelde,' in which I had made little progress last night, and read until past seven; I was and am possessed with the book—I think there is affectation in the unrequired coinages of words, which distinguishes the poem, and occasional obscurity, but there is so much truth, philosophy, poetry, and beauty, combined with passion and descriptive power of no ordinary character, that I was obliged to force myself to lay the book down. On coming down I heard dear Nina her lesson, and gave her some toys, which quite charmed her. Resumed my slowly advancing work upon the prompt-book of 'King Lear,' and am more reconciled to expending my time on these or any other of Shakespeare's works than on all the Sardanapaluses that ever were written. In the course of the morning some ideas on the part of Melantius entered my head, which led me to think farther on it, and to encourage a more sanguine expectation on the success of the character than I had ventured to entertain. Sainton arrived, and after resting and repairing himself, accompanied me to the drawing-room, where I beguiled the tediousness of the operation of sitting for a portrait with the remainder

of the volume of 'Van Artevelde,' which I think the work of a master-spirit, whose politics I fear are strictly Tory. Looked over a book on fly-fishing by S. Oliver, a contributor to Blackwood. Walked in the garden once and weeded; visited Catherine frequently. Dow arrived a little after five, and we spent rather a cheerful evening.

August 1*st.*—My mind is earnest in the cultivation of my art, and I have accordingly a pleasure in rising early to prosecute my study of it. Perseverance is invincible by any difficulty: the constant revolving of characters in the mind shows us their various phases, and enables us to choose the most luminous. Patience, *alias* indefatigability of mind, I take to be genius, as Montesquieu defines it.

At breakfast was obliged to put in practice a recommendation from Fox's 'Monthly Repository,' viz., to let children cry till they learn the fruitlessness and inconvenience of it: Willie indulged himself in the joy of grief this morning until the absence of all sympathy brought him to good behaviour.

Resumed my work at the book of 'Lear;' and looked at the critique on 'The Hunchback' and my letter to Mudford from Italy. Read and practised Lear, Melantius, Milton. Wrote letters to Kenneth, declining Manby's offer, but keeping open the negotiation to Wallace; to H. Smith, inquiring after his health; to Nichol, the publisher, recommending him to proceed with Captain T——'s play; to Miss Flower, thanking her for her present to Nina of Howitt's 'Poems,' &c.; and to Forster with the samples of my deficiency in the power of composition.

August 3*rd.*—My vanity or avidity for notice or praise, which I see is a weakness, or more probably a folly, entailing uneasy hopes and doubtings, and perhaps occasionally mortification, received a check this morning which I hope will prove a wholesome one. In the expectation (for so it must have been, though I never whispered it to myself) of reading encomiums on my acting and my friendly conduct to Knowles, I sent for the *Spectator* and the *Athenæum;* they arrived this morning, with not one word of the Victoria Theatre, and, in the *Examiner*, which gave a short article to Knowles, my name was not mentioned. I was really not at all displeased at this, for I thought it a very mild and good lesson.

Read two acts of Coleridge's 'Translation of Wallenstein.'

Was much struck with many of the thoughts, the language, and dramatic situation of what I read. Of the heroes who lent themselves to superstitious dependencies, Sertorius seems to me to be the man of the greatest genius, and the most excusable in his use of such a paltry but powerful means of influencing his fellow-men.

Read preface to Winkelmann's 'History of Ancient Art,' which promises much in the work itself. Cicero's statement of Aratus writing a poem on Astronomy in total ignorance of the subject is very good.

August 4th.—In bed I finished the first part of 'Wallenstein.'

Began my morning study of 'King Lear.' I was interrupted by the arrival of a Mr. Palmer (whom I had entirely forgotten), come to take a plaster cast of my face; I lost as little time as I could help, and found the operation not so formidably uncomfortable as I had been led to expect. The *artists*, whom Catherine declares to be image-men, were dismissed with a good luncheon, and I was left to Shakespeare and Fletcher again. I pursued my practice and reading until dinner.

After dinner I sat in Catherine's room, and read the second part or Death of Wallenstein, which is of a gloomier interest, containing passages of equal grandeur and power, and is altogether more pathetic. It is upon this drama that Schiller's reputation should take its stand. Having finished it, and conversed some little while with Catherine, I walked in the garden with my sweet children, and there read the translator's preface to Winkelmann's 'History of Ancient Art.' He makes a strong case against his predecessors, but does not excite much prepossession in his own favour by his complaints of the deficiency of his subscribers. Entered some memoranda in this book, and then reperused Winkelmann's own preface, reading aloud, in which I learn the necessity of being slow to advance a judgment on works of art, and feel his profound knowledge on this interesting subject. Began his life, which is as full of interest as instruction. What cannot man do, who resolves on doing? The son of a cobbler—"Au sein de l'indigence nourrissait de grands projets et ne perdait jamais l'espérance de les exécuter;" again, —"Il ne vivait la plupart du temps que de pain et d'eau; quoi qu'il manquât souvent de tout, on l'a toujours vu gai et content." His own account of himself, teaching the alphabet

to 'enfans sales et teigneux,' indulging his aspirations and meditating on Homer, is beautiful: "Je me disais alors, comme je me dis encore: paix, mon cœur, tes forces surpassent encore tes ennuis." Looked into French translation of Schiller; find the idea of "In to-day already walks to-morrow" is all his own. Read over most of the part of Luke in 'Riches,' and cut the play a little more.

August 5th.—Went into the drawing-room to read. I studied, or rather practised, passages of 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'King Lear,' and read 'Melantius.' I was not satisfied with myself; and thus it often happens, in beginning the day with loss, I go on in a losing spirit, instead of rallying my energies to redeem by industry neglected opportunity. Heard dear Nina part of her lesson, which she said very well. Resumed the life of Winkelmann, which interested me much: how I envy him his fortitude, his unconquerable resolution, and his practical philosophy. It is not easy to get over his indifference to the religion he first professed, which is making light to others of what a wise man would, for the sake of others at least, hold in outward reverence. In this particular, Pope, who was manifestly a Deist, is much to be commended that he adhered to the form of the religion in which he was born. Nothing but conviction can justify such a change; but Winkelman would, as was said of him, have submitted, I believe, to circumcision for equal advantages. Abstract beauty was the object of his worship. Let it be said for him that he was a good son, and a good friend. His accident at the Palazzo Ludovici is well told, and he quite interests us in his patrons, Cardinals Passionei and Albani. His descriptions of his journeys and his residence at Porto d'Anzio are delightful.

August 6th.—Began my morning's study with Hamlet's soliloquy—then rehearsed and read the two first acts of 'King Lear' and read part of the fourth act of 'Melantius.' I had not such reason to reproach myself with indolence or want of zeal to-day, which is a comfortable thought to me. I read for nearly four hours. After dinner, at which I ate a little meat, I sat with Catherine for some time, and read some pages in 'La Vie de Winkelmann,' which continues to preserve its interest for me. His observations on architecture, his principles of taste, and his warmth of feeling excite most favourable sentiments towards

him. His mistake on the picture of Casanova, and the mirth in which he indulged on others' want of tact in discriminating between antique and modern, were good checks to his presumption—but *nemo mortalium omnibus*, &c. Walked in the garden. A beautiful rainbow arched over our house, and looked like a promisé of sunshine upon it. I have superstitious feelings that are gladdened or overcast by certain "skiey influences," which look like omens to them, and which my spirit hails as such. I believe this alliance of our own fortunes with the remoter creations and glories of the Deity is more general than appears from our concealment of the whispers of our minds. Read some extracts from Spenser, in whom appears much pure beauty with much alloy. Cut still more three acts of 'Sardnapalus.'

August 7th.—Began my professional study with the soliloquy of Hamlet, which, to give with grace, earnestness, and complete abstraction, I find one of the most difficult tasks I have to master. Resumed my perusal of the life of Winkelmann. I see he subtilises too much, and is not infallible in his judgments. His preference of Mengs to Guido in his comparison of their respective figures of Apollo, not to refer to his grand mistake of Casanova's picture, is sufficient proof: but there is much to be learnt from his enthusiasm and fine sense of the beautiful. One, among many excellent observations which he offers on the principles of art, may serve as a maxim to those who study mine: "Il doit éviter, autant qu'il soit possible, toutes les actions violentes, parce que les gestes outrés et les attitudes forcées font grimacer la beauté même." The work interests me more as I proceed in it, though I do not clearly comprehend nor set much value on his theory on Allegory. Read over aloud, in order to improve my pronunciation, what I had previously read more deliberately. Cut the remaining two acts of 'Sardanapalus' for Bristol. Went over the whole of 'Melantius,' to which I do not attach myself with the ardour that is in general an augury of success. At present there are not many passages of such nature and true feeling that suggest themselves in their effect to the mind at once. They may rise to me —I must hope and search.

August 8th.—In the short interval before breakfast read in Ovid the fable of Aesacus' transformation into a cormorant; I

certainly had no idea of the poetic power of Ovid till I took up his 'Metamorphoses.' Some lines in this fable are not inapplicable to myself:

> "Oderat hic urbes, nitidâque remotus ab aulâ
> Secretos montes, et inambitiosa colebat
> Rura: nec Iliacos cœtus, nisi rarus, adibat." *

There is much pathos, and great felicity of expression in this little poem.

Resumed my efforts at Hamlet's soliloquy, of which, hard as it is, I do not despair. Rehearsed and read the third act of 'Lear,' and studied part of Melantius. Read through the four first acts of 'King Lear,' in reference to my own character, and to the *mise en scène* of the play.

August 9th.—I resumed the eternal soliloquy of Hamlet. Rehearsed and read the fourth act of 'King Lear,' and part of Melantius. Came down and took up Ovid, where I had closed the book yesterday: read the fable of the omen of the Trojan war's duration, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis, and the description of the dwelling of Fame at the "Triplicis confinia mundi," in which there is much poetry. If my recollection serves me truly, it seems to have suggested the idea of Milton's limbo, in the sort of confusion, though, indeed, in Ovid it is "the regular confusion." I was very much pleased with it.

After dinner finished the Life of Winkelmann. His melancholy death more than expiated his failings, which seem to have been those of manner rather than of disposition.

August 11th.—In musing on various things and forcing my thoughts on my profession, the account of Mrs. Siddons' nervousness on first appearing before Queen Charlotte recurred to me; and in the confidence she endeavoured to regain by the thought, that she had often acted queens, I thought she gave an unconscious testimony to her identification of herself with the characters she represented.

August 15th.—Melantius, which grows harder as I grapple more closely with it, but this will grow easier. Read a letter from Angelo, the fencing master, applying for my subscription—

* He hated towns, and from their courtly pomp
Flying afar, he sought sequestered hills
And quiet fields, nor oft did he frequent
The city's throngs.—ED. TRANS.

poor fellow! he has wrung my wrists and I have d——d him for an old rascal, little dreaming of our reversed situations. After dinner went into the garden and gave a bone to old Tip, which choked him: the poor old dog lay down and foamed. I did not know whether he was going mad or dying; I patted him and smoothed his throat and called Phillips, hurrying away the children. Phillips very cleverly poked a rope down his throat, and the old dog stood up looking very uncomfortable but relieved from his misery.

August 18*th*—(*Abbott's benefit*).—Came to town by *Billing's;* endeavouring to think over 'Virginius' for the evening. Went to theatre, incommoded by the size of the house (the Opera House). In the second scene, as I stood at the wing, I saw Grisi in the opposite box; rallied and played very fairly. The house was much moved and called for me. After a time I went on; I was greatly received. When I was dressed, I asked Abbott to say to Grisi, that I wished to be presented to her (she had expressed herself delighted with the play), and on her saying she should be delighted to make my acquaintance I went into her room and sat with her some time. Saw Grisi's last scene of 'Anna Bolena,' which was very fine.

August 21*st*.—To chambers by Billing's coach, reading the 'Médecin Malgré Lui' and part of the 'Misanthrope' on the road. The humour of the first is palpable to the dullest, but there must be a charm in the language of the 'Misanthrope,' and an effect in the character of Alceste and Celimene, too fine for a foreigner's apprehension to make this play interesting as it is to French audiences. Like Pope's verse, Molière is of very general application, as comprehensive a praise as can well be given. Found Brewster at my chambers, who cut my hair, and took orders for my wigs. Our nursery-maid called; and Talfourd came in to ask some questions about his Scotch tour, which he had decided on. I engaged to dine with him, and furnished him with necessary information.

August 23*rd*.—Finished 'Le Misanthrope,' which I like much for its passion, character, and language, but its meagreness of plot makes it a national, not an universal, *chef d'œuvre*. Finished 'L'Amour Médecin' of Molière, a silly piece of extravagance.

August 24*th*.—Tip dies.

Richmond, August 25*th*. 'Virginius.' *August,* 29*th*. 'Lear.'

[*September* 1*st* to 15*th*.—Engagement at Bristol.]

September 9*th*.— Acted very indifferently the part of William Tell, which I now thoroughly dislike. I was in low spirits, in pain, and disturbed in my best effects by the carelessness of the performers. How much it is to be lamented that there is no probation for players to pass!

Swansea, September 16*th*.—'Macbeth.'

September 17*th*.—As soon as I was up, and on my coming out to breakfast, I began to enter my expenses in my account-book: I also thought a great deal on my intended insurance, and reflecting that by insuring too much I might perhaps incapacitate myself from keeping up the policies I took out, I came to the conclusion that it would be better to invest the £1000 now held by Lord H—— in Rock shares for another £1000, and invest what I may make between the present and Christmas in Government Securities to go to the annual payment of my policy for £3000 in the Eagle Insurance, which would make together a sum to bequeath of at least £5000.

Took a warm bath, and walked on the pier, and along the sands, enjoying the beauty of the bay—really beautiful—and listening to the music of the waves gently breaking upon the shore, feeling within myself a relish of the air, the sea, the sky, of nature, and of life, that was most delicious. Came home, and before and after dinner read in Homer, the pathetic death of Patroclus.

Swansea, September 18*th*.—'Werner.'

Gloucester, September 20*th*.—Bought a small volume of Gifford's 'Baviad' and 'Mæviad' to read on my journey. Looked at the newspaper, paid my bill, and came away. Read Gifford's life. With the direct simplicity of its narration I was pleased, and affected by the touching enumeration of his sufferings; his answer to Lord Grosvenor's inquiry—that he "had no friends, and no prospects of any kind," moved me very much. What a lesson is such a life, but what a lesson is every man's life if we would only use our own minds in their examination! Read the 'Baviad' and 'Mæviad,' preferred the former: the subject was too much exhausted for a new satire, at least to equal in pungent effect the former one. They are however, both extremely good, and must have fallen like a

giant's arm upon the insect-like flutterings of the half-formed witlings whom they aimed to crush. But to imagine that Burns lived in comparative neglect while these apes were attracting notice by their absurdities!

Cehsterfield, September 23rd.—'Virginius.'

October 1st.—Looked at newspapers and wrote to Bunn, taking copy of the same, asking my former terms, varied only by the division of the benefit and the erasure of about half a dozen characters from my list.

Leicester, October 3rd.—I walked into the Market Place, where I inquired at a hosier's shop, the cost of my flesh-coloured pantaloons, and after some conversation, agreed to send a pair as a pattern from which an estimate should be forwarded to me at Liverpool. I may save a few pounds in my professional life, if it lasts many years longer, and make a fitter appearance—both desirable objects. Saw my baggage put in the Nottingham coach, and walked on to look at the Roman milestone, which is a most interesting relic. The coach took me up, and a most stewing, unpleasant journey I had to Nottingham, where I arrived, by the promise of 5*s.* to the driver, at half-past five. Went directly to the theatre, through a crowded fair, and found my trunks there—dressed in good time, and under the circumstances of my day acted tolerably well the intolerable Virginius. In paying me after the play, although there was a very good house, Mrs. M—— made a mistake, a very palpable one of £1, which I did not allow to pass. Went to my lodgings, which I found comfortable enough, and was glad indeed to get into my bed. Surprised and delighted at the unexpected good house to which I had acted.

Nottingham, October 4th.—'Hamlet.'

Liverpool, October 6th.—I rehearsed Macbeth with particular care, and with a freedom of deportment and freshness of manner, that gratified me in causing me to believe in the perception of my improvement. Miss Huddart was the Lady Macbeth.

Laid out my dress, giving parts of it to Marshall to mend, and after dinner went to bed, being anxious to play well; slept sound and went to the theatre much refreshed. Dressed in good time, was cool and self-possessed, and played with a

truth, grace, and energy, that I think should place this as the best representation I have yet given of Macbeth. The audience, proverbially the most insensible and apathetic of any, seemed to feel it, for they went with the stream that bore me on, and became so much excited that, after much applause, they became tumultuous for my reappearance—a very unusual practice here; and, at Clarke's request, I went on to make my bow before them.

October 7th.—Went to the theatre, where I dressed leisurely—a great tranquilliser of the nerves—and began the part of Werner with a feeling of indisposition to the task; thought on the necessity for exertion and pains in continuing my improvement, and performed the character in my very best manner, though a little checked and annoyed by the inattention of the performers. Had the sense to banish once or twice a tendency to ill-humour, for which I feel thankful. Dr. Lardner came into my room and chatted with me for some time.

October 8th.—Felt considerably tired from the exertion of last night, and was confirmed in my opinion of the necessity of intervals of rest in a week's labours. Gave Marshall my dress for Sardanapalus to alter, and went to rehearsal, where I took pains with my character and hoped to satisfy myself as well at night. Went to the theatre, where I found a most wretched house; this was a sad surprise and damp to my hopes, as I regarded my engagement's success as depending on this night. It staggered me, but I did not permit it to hang upon my spirits, but went through the part of Sardanapalus with as much spirit as the wet blanket of Mr. W——, a miserable pretender to his art, would allow to burst forth; and, indeed, the performance was a very fair one. But the house! the house!—I was almost vexed. Dr. Lardner came into my room, and interested me with an account of the hospitable arrangements of Edinburgh, upon the meeting of the *savans* there. Returning home, half fretful (which I had no right to be, for I have made a speculation which has failed whilst others have succeeded), I read the *Examiner* and, on going to bed, a scene from Racine's 'Iphigénie.'

October 9th.—Rose with sore and almost fretful feelings on the utter neglect I experience in this place, but a little

reflection—looking to the bottom of the page—soon righted my mind, and with the quotation, "Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito," &c., I went cheerfully to the work of my toilet. The falling off in the week's revenue made me think of relinquishing the plan I had formed of spending Saturday and Sunday at some bathing-place in the neighbourhood, but my state of body seems to require some such restorative. Wrote a little and went to rehearsal, where I took pains, and pleased myself with my manner of going through Virginius. Applied to Clarke and Lewis to let me off from Tuesday, but I learn the danger of ever yielding a straw to these managers; they never will relinquish what they once obtain.

Laid out my clothes for the theatre, and went there. Languid, oppressed, and dispirited, I felt when dressed quite unequal to acting, and when I saw the miserable house before me, I sunk lower still. I can bear up very well against indifference of this sort until my strength begins to decline under my labour, and then the body and mind act upon each other. I thought of the duty that was upon me to try and do my best, if only to reap the benefit of study from the night. I did my best, and acted very fairly the old drag, Virginius. Considering circumstances, I cannot help lamenting my visit, which has sold for a paltry sum what in two more years might have been a great chance.

October 10*th.*—Went to the rehearsal of Wolsey and felt my cold very bad. Whilst at the theatre Clarke told me of the *Liverpool Mercury*, my systematic defamer, having turned round and spoken of me as the best actor of the day—this was wonderful. Received letter from Leicester about my flesh pantaloons. Came home and continued my writing; sent for the *Mercury*, which I read. At the theatre I found my cold very troublesome, being obliged to take a handkerchief on the stage; acted Sardanapalus, but tamely, to a very indifferent house.

October 13*th.*—Wolsey and William Tell. *October* 14*th.*—Werner.

[*October* 20*th to November* 17*th.*—Engagement at Dublin.]

October 31*st.*—Met at Colonel D'Aguilar's, Bulwer, whom I liked very much; Sir Hussey Vivian, whom I thought very amiable and agreeable; Major Forster and Mrs. Forster, whom

I was struck with for her animation and smartness, whom I should like very much as any other man's wife though not so well as my own. I passed a very pleasant day. Bulwer was quite what Sheil described him, very good-natured, and of course intelligent. I was amused by an anecdote he reported of Hume accosting Lord Hill at the fire of Westminster Hall, "My lord, my lord, there are but eight pioneers here, and the country pays for ten!" Sir H. Vivian spoke with great confidence on the probable collision of the two houses before two years had passed. I urged Bulwer to write a play; he told me he had written one, great part of which was lost, on the death of Cromwell. In the drawing-room I found Colonel Mitchell, with whom I got into a long conversation, and from whom I heard first of the basaltic columns in Auvergne. Saw Lady Vivian, but came not near her. Got into an amusing discussion with a very intelligent naïve young lady, Colonel D'Aguilar, and Mitchell, on moral philosophy, in which I was greatly entertained by the young lady's pertinent observations and acuteness. Bulwer offered to set me down, and hoped to meet me in London.

November 10th.—Went to the theatre, where, on dressing, I was seized with a violent bowel complaint; obliged to send for brandy, which affected my head. I played, as might be expected, very unequally, a want of finish from a want of collectedness; but in the last scene, 'Macbeth,' I was very good, grand in my death—I felt it. My soul would have lived on from very force of will: death could not have been felt by a man so resolute to resist it.

November 12th.—Went to the theatre collected and at ease, but not with that certainty of preserving the *tout ensemble* that I am in the characters of Shakespeare ambitious of doing. I felt confident of being very fair, but not entirely Hamlet. My performance seemed to give great satisfaction, and there were a great many things that I did really well—scenes that I played well. Some of the first act was good, but wants improvement and finish. The second act was on the whole good, particularly the concluding soliloquy, from time and self-possession. The third act had much to praise, the soliloquy, scene with Ophelia, part of advice, part of closet scene; the rest was to me unsatisfactory. The grave scene was not good

till the entrance of Laertes; the death was very well and the whole of the last scene. Calcraft came into my room, and seemed quite satisfied in thinking this will be one of my Dublin plays—it ought to be, for there is more thought in it than in all I do. Supped on oysters.

November 13*th.*—Went to the theatre to rehearse Lear, which I did very badly, and, what is worse, in a very bad temper; ridiculous as it is, I really believe the cause of it, at least principally, was the sight of my neat book in the dirty prompter's hands, suffering with every turning of the leaves. Read a note for tickets from Mr. Macnamara, and also from Lady C. Whiteford. Notes from James about freedom of the city and coat of arms, and from a young ass called M—— wishing to play Edgar for my night.

November 17*th.*—Dressed and went on the stage prepared to act my best, and resolute to do so, but such a Babel of a house was scarcely ever heard; from the beginning to the end of 'King Lear' and through the interlude of the screen scene of 'School for Scandal' almost all was dumb show. Colonel D'Aguilar came round in despair. I had to go on to address them. I told them I had the greatest pleasure in playing before them when they chose to be an *audience*, and how ambitious I was to uphold myself in their opinion. It must have been the only entertainment of the evening. I made gratuities to the servants, shook hands with those actors I saw. Came home. Woulds called and supped, and we signed the agreement of partnership. *Quod felix sit.*

November 18*th.*—On board for England. To Liverpool.

——— 19*th.*—Got on shore about 9 o'clock, took a car up to the Angel Inn, where I breakfasted, and read the newspaper account of the discharge of the Ministry. The question that rises to me on this is simply, how long will men permit such an impious and inequitable arrangement as the possession of power by any one man or set of men without the severest responsibility?

Dined and went to the theatre to see if there was anything decent there. The play was 'Brutus,' and a brute part of him that played it—Tarquinia—all very miserable. A Miss Lidesq, a dancer, and a Mr. Simpson, in an old man, were the sole exceptions to the general badness of the company. Hammond,

who was a good actor, has spoiled himself by managing: let me not forget that!

Lincoln, November 20th.—'Virginius.'

November 21st.—'Stranger.'

———— 22*nd.*—Was stopped by letters, to my great surprise, from Bunn, and from Mrs. Macready. The first was an attempt by a proposal, which I did not understand, to restore the negotiation; the other was a *carte blanche* to act, in the case of auxiliaries, as I thought best for her interest. I replied to Bunn, that I was so far engaged I could make him no direct answer, and that I would wait and see him in town; kept copy.

At dinner I proceeded in the perusal of 'Eugene Aram,' which interests me extremely, although what I knew of the sterner, more terrible, and more vulgar reality—I allude to the vulgarity of the persons, and the sordid nature of the motive—contrasted with the insatiable thirst for knowledge in that extraordinary man.

November 23rd.—At 10, Mr. Robertson called and, having paid my bill and posted my letters, I got a sight of the gorgeous front of the cathedral and the Heaven's Gate as I passed down to the river. This canal-like stream, the Witham, embanked on both sides, offers no variety of prospect; the cattle in the water or grazing along its sides, a horseman on the bank, recall Cuyp and Wouverman to one's recollection, and afford us a guess at what Holland must be. We walked six miles, sometimes turning to look upon the regally-sited cathedral, which alone is worth a visit to this city, and constantly enjoying the freshness of the brisk cool air, the beauty of the morning, and our exhilarating exercise. On getting into the boat, which we did by a small one let out from a windlass, I reconnoitered the cabin and, finding it too close for me, got a seat to leeward and proceeded with 'Eugene Aram;' I read till the light would serve me no longer, and, after paying 3*s.* for my passage, was conducted from the boat by Mr. Robertson to my inn at Boston. I found the *Globe*, which I read through, and having dined returned once more to 'Eugene Aram,' which I finished; it has afforded me great pleasure. I took it up in order to see if it contained theatrical effects; I soon lost sight of all ideas of the sort. I quarrel still with the title; I cannot but believe

that it would have been better to have used the material of the story, and have left in its own deep mystery that unfathomable compound of good and ill, of baseness and exalted sentiments, which the painfully interesting and awful character of Aram presents to us. But the book is beautiful, full of splendid illustrations, the sweetest thoughts, the tenderest feelings. The characters of Aram, Houseman, dear old Lester, and Madeline are exquisitely preserved—it cost me many tears.

Boston, November 24th.—Went to the theatre, and was struck during the time of dressing, with the hollow sound of an occasional voice or step. My fears were realised by the most chilling aspect of a house I almost ever saw. Still I wished to use the night as exercise, and though I did not act exactly well, yet I guarded myself very much from lapsing into my frequent vices of manner. I was cross and was peevish, which was very impertinent, and quite unprovoked.

November 25th.—Read several stanzas from Tasso's 'Gerusalemme,' and a section in Cicero's Offices on the style and character of a man's house, as applicable to to-day as when he wrote. I was much pleased with the passage immediately preceding it: "Rectum est autem, etiam in illis contentionibus, quæ cum inimicissimis fiunt, etiam si nobis indigna audiamus, tamen gravitatem retinere, iracundiam repellere. Quæ enim cum aliqua perturbatione fiunt, nec constanter fieri possunt nec iis, qui adsunt, probari." *

Louth, November 29th.—Read an ode and part of an epistle in Horace. Found on examining the current in which my thoughts set, that management would never answer for me. I have not that management of my mind that would enable me to dismiss one subject and substitute another. I should lose my profession by it; and already I am alarmed at its effects in the possession it takes of my thoughts.

Walked with Mr. Robertson to the post-office and to the theatre, which answers also the double purpose of a sessions-house—it is not the worst I have seen.

Went to the theatre, dressed in the magistrates' room, "quite

* We should preserve our own composure and avoid anger, even in contests with our greatest enemies, and when we are subjected to the worst affronts. For what is done in disorder cannot be dignified, nor can it commend itself to the approbation of the by-standers. Cicero: Offices, I. 137.—ED. TRANS.

convenient." When ready to go on the stage, Mr. Robertson appeared with a face full of dismay: he began to apologise and I guessed the remainder. "Bad house?" "Bad, sir, there's no one!" "What! nobody at all?" "Not a soul, sir, except the Warden's party in the boxes." "What, the d——l! not one person in the pit or gallery?" "Oh, yes, there are one or two." "Are there five?" "Oh, yes, five." "Then go on, we have no right to give ourselves airs. If the people do not choose to come and see us, go on at once!" Mr. Robertson was astonished at what he thought my philosophy, being accustomed, as he said, to be "blown up" by his *stars* when the houses were bad. I never acted Virginius better in all my life—good taste and earnestness. Smyth, who was contemporary with me at Rugby and has a living in this neighbourhood, came in and sat with me and saw the play, with which he was greatly pleased.

December 1st.—Enjoyed my walk very much; wrote directions for my luggage. Dozed from fatigue after dinner; wrote a letter to Kenneth, made my toilet, and went to theatre. Felt that the house was not very good; but determined to make a study of the night, which I did, and certainly acted great part of Hamlet in a very true and impressive manner. I hit upon the exact feeling in the passage, which I have often thought on, "He was a man," &c. My intercourse with Horatio, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, &c., was earnest and real, *ad homines*. Indeed, it was a good performance. Smyth came into my room after the play and talked of my speaking the closet scene at Rugby. He also told me of endeavouring to commit a poacher. He is a clergyman! Thought and calculated for Bath. Read in Racine's 'Esther.'

December 2nd.—'Stranger.'

Sheffield, December 9th.—'Virginius.'

December 10th.—Went to the theatre, where I acted William Tell only tolerably. Was a good deal distressed by the actors, imperfect and inattentive, and once or twice rather angry with them, but very kind to the poor little child who acted with me, though several times disconcerted by her; but this is from having children of my own—the dear ones.

My dresser is a Benedictine monk on leave from the convent in Ireland on account of derangement. His trade is a tailor.

December 11th.—Went to St. Paul's Church to look upon the

spot where the remains of my beloved mother lie, and breathed a prayer over them for the peace and virtue of me and mine and for the welfare of my dear children, which again and again I implore God to grant. Acted Werner.

December 12th.—'William Tell.'

Brighton, December 18th.—Went to the theatre, where, in the play of 'Sardanapalus' not one person was perfect, and whenever I attempted effect I was foiled; still, I did not play well, and want study. Heard the news of Mr. J. Webster taking fright at Ulric and, in consequence, the play of 'Werner' cannot be done to-morrow.—pleasant! Was told of Polhill having retired from Drury Lane on paying £2000; this I suppose is not the exact truth, or all of it, but there is some truth in it.

December 19th.—At the theatre I packed up my bag, and despatched that and my deal case to the coach office. Acted the Stranger very well, with reality, collectedness, force and feeling; kept my eyes open and was careful throughout. Mr. Bew came in to pay me my small earnings, which nevertheless I take very thankfully. Paid the servants, but forgot one, so wrote a note to Mr. Strickland to ask him to pay it for me.

Elstree, December 30th.—Gathered my papers together preparatory to my departure, and settled my accounts with Letitia and self; bring the year's expenditure and receipt to a balance, for which I have great reason to be thankful to Almighty God. Arranged the business of to-morrow, and endeavoured to think of something for the hiatus in the Bath season. Went out to examine the hayrick, which I found most shamefully handled, and learnt that the good hay alone was taken; gave orders to make them take all or none. Looked at fences and walked round the garden. Came in and packed up my clothes, which occupied me a considerable time; finished the arrangement and cutting of the book of 'King Henry V.' into three acts. Prepared my account books for next year, and made my will in order that no mistake might be made by acting on my former ones.

1835.

[The following extracts are copied into the beginning of the Diary for 1835:]

Non possidentem multa vocaveris
Recte beatum; rectius occupat
Nomen beati, qui deorum
Muneribus sapienter uti,
Duramque callet pauperiem pati,
Pejusque leto flagitium timet:
Non ille pro caris amicis
Aut patria timidus perire.*

Esto bonus miles, tutor bonus, arbiter idem
Integer. Ambiguæ si quando citabere testis
Incertæque rei, Phalaris licet imperet, ut sis
Falsus, et admoto dictet perjuria tauro,
Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,
Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.†

The primal duties shine aloft, like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man—like flowers.—*Wordsworth.*

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* The lord of boundless revenues,
Salute him not as happy: no,
Call him the happy who can use
The bounty that the gods bestow;
Can bear the load of poverty,
And tremble not at death, but sin:
No recreant he when called to die
In cause of country or of kin.—*Conington.*
Horace, *Ad Lollium*, 4th Bk. Ode IX.

† Be a good soldier, and a guardian just,
An upright judge. If in a doubtful cause
As witness called, though Phalaris command
Falsehoods, and dictate perjury, his bull
At hand to torture, hold it infamous
Life to prefer to honour, and, for sake
Of living, sacrifice the ends of life.—Ed. Trans.
Juvenal, 8th Sat. v. 79.

Bath, January 1st.—With gratitude to Almighty God for His past bounties and with prayers for continuance of His mercies to me and mine, I begin this year. That it may please Him to let me profit by the experience of those I have lived, and restrain my remaining years within the bounds of temperance and prudence, educating my children in His faith and love and fear, and bequeathing to them, through His mercy, the means of comfort and an honourable example. Amen.

January 5th.—Went to theatre and fell into ill-humour with the old and incapable hair-dresser: dismissed him, but sent for him again, not wishing to distress or offend him. He made a figure of me! I acted, as I thought, the first scene of 'Macbeth' well, but the audience were perfectly apathetic, and in the second became vulgarly unquiet. This unhinged me, and I did not recover myself the whole night. I am ready to ascribe the greater share of blame to myself, but the audience were like no other I ever saw; they did not notice me on my first entrance—on the bridge—and very indifferently afterwards. I acted very ill, but better than such an audience deserved, which is not saying much. The play was excellently done.

January 6th.—Occupied at the theatre from ten till quarter past three—saw old Mr. Taylor, who seemed very sanguine, good old man, about the success of the speculation. I certainly am not. On a rough calculation of my expectations from the prospect afforded by the present receipts, I think the chances are rather against a balance in favour than for it, and if in favour I think it must be very small, and not at all worth my time and trouble. *Dixi.*

January 7th.—'Werner.'

——— *8th.*—Acted Othello with a feeling of having no sympathy from my audience; thought myself deficient in earnestness and spirit, but do not regret having done it, as it was a useful rehearsal to me. I never saw the 'Senate' put so well upon the stage. I think I may play Othello well, but the prescriptive criticism of this country, in looking for particular points instead of contemplating one entire character, abates my confidence in myself. Mr. Woulds told me that he had heard from Mr. Field of general discontent at the prices being restored.

The house to-night was wretched, but what could be expected at such a time?

January 9th.—Heard from Mr. Woulds the account of the first week's balance, which was very satisfactory. Read the newspaper, and to my astonishment and satisfaction saw Talfourd member for Reading!

January 10th.—'William Tell.' *January 12th.*—'Virginius.' *January 13th.*—'Werner.'

January 15th.—Went into box-office and was surprised and gratified to see so excellent a box-sheet, which I hope is an omen of future success. Coming to my lodgings I amused myself with my darling children, and after dinner sent a note to Mr. Woulds, reminding him of some chairs required in the farce. Read my part, which I was anxious to play well.

Acted Henry V. more good humouredly than I have ever done, and with very considerable spirit, and much self-possession. I was once out in a response, through anxiety about the general effect. After the play went into the private box where Catherine was sitting, and saw two acts of 'Married Life' with her. Was very much pleased to see so good a house.

January 16th.—The receipt of last night was so good, that it has very much raised my hopes as to the success of the season.

January 17th.—'Lear.'

——— *19th.*—Saw Dowton at rehearsal, who complimented me on Lear, and gave me to understand that my assumption of age was good, which much pleased me. During the rehearsal, with which I took much pains, I laid by and put out my clothes: returned much fatigued, having been gratified with the sight of a very fair box-sheet. Went to the theatre, where, whilst I was dressing, Stanfield came in to see me. He gave me a sad account of Bunn, whom he had left, and hoped I should not return to London this season—also of the laceration of Wallack by the newspapers, which he seemed to think exceeding in severity. Was quite disposed to act Hotspur, well on every account, and spoke the two first speeches better than I ever did before, but Worcester was imperfect and knocked me up; Lady Percy, the same; Sir R. Vernon, the same. I made the best of it I could, and the fight rallied the

house. Dowton was the Falstaff. Was angry at the slovenly state of the play. Spoke to Mr. Woulds about noticing the behaviour of the defaulters, but, as usual, the same answers.

January 24th.—Lord Townley.

To Bristol, January 26th.—Went to the theatre, and acted Macbeth extremely well, with earnestness, care, and feeling: never before spoke the "To-morrow and to-morrow" with such truth.

Dowton (!) made a complaint that his name was in smaller letters than mine, and wrote the same to the prompter.

[*January 30th* to *6th February.*—Continued engagement at Bristol and Bath.]

Manchester, February 13th.—Went to the theatre and was pleased to see so good a house. I should have got much more by sharing—no matter: it is very well, thank God! Acted well Werner, and was very much applauded.

February 15th.—I made up the cast of next week's business at Bath, settled all and wrote the heading of the bill, which I inclosed to Mr. Woulds. Received letters with receipts and balance up to Friday at Bath; from Mr. Fox, respecting the MS. play sent to me, in whose letter Catherine wrote a hasty greeting.

February 16th.—'Werner.' *February 17th.*—'Sardanapalus.'

——— *18th.*—Arrived at Halifax. Went to rehearsal; poor Guildenstern had only one eye. From rehearsal, one of the actors, Mr. Nantz, went with me to show me the Gibbet Hill, where the stone on which the criminals laid their heads is still visible, though deeply embedded in earth: from thence he accompanied me to a public-house, formerly the Gaol, and now called the Jail Inn, where the blade of the axe, called the Maiden, was shown to me; it is very like the blade of a spade with two holes in it. Not so weighty as I should suppose its office would require.

To Manchester, February 19th.—Went to the theatre, acted Werner in my very best manner. The house, which was good, and would have been very fine but for the weather, evidently came to see the play. They gave their deepest attention and applause, which I strove to deserve from them; I was often very real. A letter from dear Catherine. Packed

up some of my boxes. Took place to Birmingham. Sent papers to Smith and Forster.

February 20th.—I went to see Mr. David Holt's cotton-mill; the machinery for carding the wool, for spinning, winding, is most wonderful, but the sight of so many young people confined to such monotonous labour in such an atmosphere, and the reflection on the quantity of human life and intellect that is thus, like part of the machinery, worn away, was very painful.

To Whitworth's machinery manufactory. The methods of planing iron, making iron worms, and above all, the machine for making pins, were so many wonders to me, delighting as they surprised me. The two pieces of iron, of surfaces so exactly similar that they adhered on being placed together and revolved upon a hair placed between them, was an interesting instance of a philosophical truth. We proceeded to Dyer's machinery for making the cards for cotton. Here was another wonder and delight. Called in at the "*Lloyd's*" of Manchester, a very handsome room with excellent accommodation. Heard the cheering news of Sir R. Peel's defeat in Abercromby's election (as Speaker). Went to the theatre, where I found letters from Letty in a frank from Forster inclosing a request from Mr. W——, formerly 30th Foot, to procure him any, the humblest situation in some theatre, so dreadfully was he reduced by his extravagance and thoughtlessness.

February 21st.—To Birmingham.

Bath, February 22nd.—Left Birmingham at quarter past seven and passed a very uninteresting day; nothing in the passengers and the country through which we passed to awaken thought, except a glance or two at Malvern and the church at Bromsgrove which seemed worth looking at. Went over the two parts of Ford and Gambia; took up the *Globe* at Gloucester, where I read the Tory and Reforming statements of the "gloom" and "ecstasies" into which the vote on the Speakership had thrown the country. It seems to me that the real ground on which this question is based is this — whatever it may originally have been, whether a question of party or principle, it was now made a test of political principle by the importance which the Tory advocates gave to it, and the clamour they raised in anticipating their certain triumph. Came on to Bristol. A Mr. John Smith, of the *Liverpool*

Mercury, claimed acquaintance with me; he was civil, but I never saw the man before. Was obliged to wait at Bristol for a coach, which brought me to Bath by ten o'clock. Found dear Catherine and children quite well. A letter from Letitia. Talked much. Tired: to bed.

February 23rd.—Gambia. Went to rehearsal, where I found the play in a very disgraceful state—was detained by it to a late hour. Mr. and Mrs. Woulds wished to speak to me; they did speak an "infinite deal of nothing," which ended in his declaration of his intention, drawn out by his wife's cork-screwing demands upon his speech, to retain the management upon the original footing. I could not escape from them till four o'clock: I then passed through the lobby, where I saw the box-book—the front rows were not filled! Despairing and worn down in spirit I came to my lodgings; dined; without time to rest returned to theatre, where I acted Gambia in the 'Slave' really well—earnestly and really. The house was a few shillings over £50! Mr. and Mrs. Woulds again detained me; I recommended urging the season to a close with all possible speed. They still seemed to hesitate, but my mind is made up.

February 26th.—Hamlet. *February 28th.*—Rob Roy.

Bristol, March 2nd.—Acted Hamlet in my very best manner to a very good house, and in my own voice. Saw Mr. Lovell; talked with him about his play.

March 5th.—Rob Roy.

Bath, March 6th.—Oakley. *March 7th.*—Sardanapalus.

Bristol, March 9th.—Took a fly up to the M——'s, where I found an early dinner prepared. Before M——'s arrival, Mrs. M—— communicated to me a piece of information that surprised and grieved me: no other than that Mr. M—— had lately been in frequent conversation with one of Irving's followers, and had been brought to believe in his doctrine—declaring that this was the "True Church." How extraordinary and lamentable it is that this trick and trade of men, called doctrine, should so bewilder the understanding and occupy the minds of men, which ought to be concentrated on the endeavour to enlarge their comprehension to a due conception of the infinite love and power of the Creator, and upon the zealous labour of offering Him the most acceptable kind of

adoration—which is by ascertaining and rigidly acting on the best system of morals. I dined and remained till five, when M—— brought me to the theatre in his carriage, and took leave of me. I acted very fairly the Stranger and Petruchio to a very fair house. Daniel came in to say farewell. The audience called for me, and would not be content. I had to go on in my travelling dress and take my leave of them. Made gratuities to the servants, and left with regret dear old Bristol.

Bath, March 10th.—Henry IV.

March 15th.—Forster told me of Talfourd having completed a tragedy called 'Ion.' What an extraordinary, what an indefatigable man!

Salisbury, March 16th.—Tried to act Macbeth, but, "confusion to my Lady!" it was too farcical, and would have been good as Dollalolla, but quite a travestie in the part she played.

My spirits have been much depressed; the heavy labour of my onward life, indispensable to secure my blessed children's independence, makes more uncertain the fulfilment of my desire to watch over and direct their education; but the consideration of the truth condensed in the precept, "To thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man," has comforted and reassured me.

March 17th.—After rehearsal I walked to Brodie's shop, the bookseller, printer, banker, member of parliament, &c., of this city. I like to see such a choice. Bought guide and history of Salisbury, and experienced great attention from the gentleman in the shop; read the papers there. Went to the next door to see a Gothic banquetting-hall, which had been many years built up, but was now restored to its original form and decoration; it was very interesting as the hall of a merchant and shows the wealth of this city in earlier times.

March 18th.—Hamlet. *March 19th.*—Werner.

Salisbury to London, March 20th.—Called at Brodie's, where I bought a book of extracts from Dryden to read on my journey, the gentleman in the shop was, as before, extremely obliging, gave me the papers to read, and chatted. I parted with him after he had taken down at his request my address, that he might send me a newspaper. Returning to my lodgings, paid a very extortionate bill and made gratuities to the servants. Pope (the actor), I perceive, is dead—*de mortuis*

nil nisi bonum. The coach called for me, and looking occasionally at the beautiful spire of the cathedral, and at some rude fortifications on the road, my day was occupied with Dryden, most tranquilly and pleasingly. Few of his poems are completely unexceptionable, but what transcendent passages are to be found in almost all! The opening of the ode on Mrs. Anne Killigrew, many lines in it, and the close are of the highest order; on the death of Lady Abingdon; the death of Arcite; Cymon: indeed, all his more finished works are full of power and beauty. He fails most where he seems to endeavour to compete with Shakespeare; what mere conceit is his passage on Death after Claudio's freezing guess at its horrors! He afforded me great amusement and I hope some instruction. I did not quite agree in his criticism on Horace and Juvenal, but that is probably from my imperfect acquaintance with them. Reached London in good time.

Elstree, March 23rd.—My dear boy continuing unwell, and Catherine uneasy and trying experiments in medicine on him, I thought it better to send him at once to town. Horses were sent for and the party set off.

I took up the novel of 'Pelham' again, which interested me less from its story than from the maxims and deductions which the reader is enabled to draw from it, among these, not among the least profitable, if well weighed and duly acted on, is that wise remark, "Common sense never quarrels with any one." Oh, that I had early received the benefit of such wise inculcations. Catherine, Letty, and children returned, bringing with them medicine, &c., and a Salisbury paper for me with a criticism of the most detracting character. I thought the incivility of the sender, the superintendent of Mr. Brodie's shop, quite inexcusable: I was annoyed by it and by the article. Ought I to look at newspapers? they irritate and pain me, as affecting in a degree my income. Should I not, with "my wing on the wind and my eye on the sun," go onward, right on, without looking for or heeding aught save what I feel affects my interest. I very soon dismissed it. Finished 'Pelham,' which I think a very useful book.

Bath, March 28th.—Wolsey.

Exeter, March 30th.—I begin to despair of obtaining that mastery over myself, which I owe to myself, to my children,

and to society. It is no excuse nor plea that I suffer so keenly as I do from regret and shame at my own intemperance. I feel the folly, the madness, the provoking extravagance of my behaviour, treating men like slaves, and assuming a power over them which is most unjustifiable and most dangerous, and yet contrition and stinging reflection seem to have no power in the punishment they inflict or of producing amendment. I do not wish to harbour one ungrateful thought, for though my public life is far, far from happy, yet my domestic happiness is more than an equipoise to its annoyances, yet I cannot think of my education, and the ills derived from the counsel and example afforded me without heartfelt repinings. To God Almighty I lift my prayer, that I may be enabled to subdue this hateful and degrading vice of temper, so as to help my blessed children in the first best worldly endeavour of governing their own words.

April 1*st.*—Hamlet. *April* 3*rd.*—Werner.

Elstree, April 5*th.*—Saw in the newspaper the death of Dr. Maton, a loss to his country, and individually to me a great one from the confidence I had in his skill, and the gratitude with which I have ever remembered him. He saved my life, I firmly believe, in my very serious illness.

April 8*th.*—Received a letter from Mr. Smith, of Norwich, offering to share there after £15 a night, which I accepted.

April 10*th.*—[Visit to Bourne, at Crayford.]

—— 14*th.*—Wrote an answer (copied) to Mr. Bunn, declining to perform in London this season, a resolution which I formed upon long deliberation and taking every view I could of my own situation.

Wrote to Beetham, inclosing my account with Bunn. Again I have cause of thankfulness for this useful and excellent habit of registering my proceedings. Wrote to Geo. Robins, requesting him to arbitrate on Mr. Bunn's disputed payment. Worked in the garden, weeding, for about an hour and a half, "my faithful dog bearing me company." Read Vanbrugh's play of 'Æsop' and part of 'The Relapse.'

April 16*th.*—Received letter from Mr. Bunn, offering me £30 per week to act four nights in the week and half a clear benefit. Considered all the motives that my desire to form a right judgment could suggest, and thought it unadvisable to

appear in London under the circumstances of the present season. I have endeavoured to see the path most likely to lead to good for my own and my dear family's sake; I hope in God that I have chosen it. I wrote to decline the offer.

Norwich, April 20th.—After dinner reposed, and strove to keep my mind fixed on Macbeth; I felt it was my business, and acted parts of it well—the soliloquy before the murder; part of the dagger and the murder scene; the banquet part of the scene of queen's death; and the last scene.

I felt the benefit of taking pains.

April 21st.—Read two Odes of Horace ('Tyrrhena regum progenies' and 'Exegi monumentum'), at breakfast. The first is an especial favourite: it is poetry of the best kind, the best feelings, and glimpses of pictures that wile the imagination to other scenes and climes. Part of it is an authority for my reflections of yesterday. "Quod adest, memento componere æquus." "Ille potens sui laetusque deget, cui licet in diem dixisse, Vixi," &c.

April 22nd.—Read at breakfast the beautiful ode of Horace, 'Ad Lollium,' Ode IX. Book 4. How much do I desire to obtain that "animus secundis temporibus dubiisque rectus." The concluding stanzas I have prefixed to this diary: they really delight me. Walked for about an hour and a half and thought occasionally on Hamlet.

Read with the dictionary one or two stanzas of Tasso, and, with an earnest desire of acting Hamlet well, lay down on the bed after dinner striving to keep it in my mind. Went refreshed and rather confident to the theatre, but very much disappointed in my own performance. I might find an excuse for my inability to excite the audience in the difficulty of ascertaining where the audience was, but I allow no plea or reservation in the question of playing as I ought or not. I did not satisfy myself. My only consolation was that, though provoked once or twice, I manifested not the slightest appearance of anger. How is it that, with the pains and precaution I take, I should thus disappoint myself? Am I too fastidious and too careful? Were I less so, what would become of me?

In the opening speeches to the king and queen I was better than usual—more direct, and with more meaning and true feeling. My soliloquy was, at least the latter part of it,

flurried, not well discriminated, not well given in regard to action—it wants finish and study. The scene with Horatio, &c., still requires study and earnestness; the interview with and address to the Ghost, re-arrangement, except the latter part, which I did well to-night. The last scene of the first act was amended to-night, but needs study, finish, clear discrimination.

Act second—scene with Polonius—more ease, abstraction, and point; with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, more ease and dignity and purpose; with the players, more point and discrimination. The soliloquy also requires a little finish.

Act third—soliloquy requires, and always will require, study and practice. I was pretty well to-night; with Ophelia, a little softening and practice; with the players, throughout, re-arrangement and study; the scene with Horatio, a little more melancholy and tenderness. The music beginning *piano* is very good, the play scene is good, and the remainder of the act. The closet scene requires a little revision and correcting.

Act fourth—try over that scene often.

Act fifth—requires much earnestness and much study; it was, as a whole, the best part of the play to-night.

April 23rd.—I must not forget an anecdote Mr. Simpson told me of Madame Schroeder which evinces clearly the love of their art with which the German actors are inspired. He asked her, after the play of 'Romeo and Juliet,' how she, who could so delineate the sublime character of Lady Macbeth, could condescend to represent one so inferior as Lady Capulet? "Condescend," she replied, "is it not Shakespeare I acted?"

April 25th.—Virginius.

London, May 1st.—From chambers took cab to St. James's Square. Dined at the Windham (the best club in London) with Lardner, and went with him to the Royal Institution. Was very much interested by the lecture on Halley's comet and pleased with Lardner's delivery.

Elstree, May 5th.—On coming down read the *Spectator*, the direct meaning and reasoning tone of which newspaper pleased me. Spent some time about the garden and house affairs, and had the satisfaction of dismissing an intention I had formed of expending some money on a piece of drawing-room furniture; resolved to dispense with it, and am pleased with my resolution. Thought on my affairs. Began the perusal, as an exercise for

the improvement of my delivery and critical judgment, of Milton's great poem.

May 7th.—Read Talfourd's tragedy of 'Ion;' pleased with the opening scenes and, as I proceeded, arrested and held by the interest of the story and the characters, as well as by the very beautiful thoughts, and the very noble ones, with which the play is interspersed. How delightful to read his dedication to his master and benefactor, Dr. Valpy, and the gentle outpourings of his affectionate heart towards his friends and associates; if one did not love, one would envy such a use of such abilities.

Continued the perusal of 'Van Artevelde,' in which I find so much to please me. I know few scenes more dramatic than that between Artevelde and Van den Bosch—and nothing of its kind superior to Clara's description of Ukenheim.

May 8th.—Opened Herodotus, which I began with much care, reading the account of the hostilities between the Persians and the Greeks. I then read the story of Iphis and Anaxarete in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' was impatient of the silly nonsense which some commentator has appended to the poetry in the shape of notes—it is the conceit of stupidity. Continued my perusal of Milton, reading the notes, and going through the text with a loud voice.

After dinner resumed 'Philip Van Artevelde,' the first volume of which I finished. How much is there of deep thought in it! how much to awaken and stimulate thought in the reader! The song of Elena, the description of her mind, its growth, its singleness, and the intensity of her love, the effects of its disappointment, the description of the light and vain-hearted youth, and her remembrance of her native Italy, are all beautiful.

Bath, May 12th.—Ruminated on the sore subject of my expenses, and certainly were I not hampered with the lease of my house, I would leave it; as it is I do not well know what to do. A case of self-interest brought to my mind the counterpart of the case of a graduated property-tax, and feeling in my own person the injustice of such a scale, I am obliged to apply it where the argument makes for me. A graduated property-tax is an injustice. Fonblanque is right.

Worcester, May 13th.—Arrived about five; and, after looking at my rooms, proceeded to the theatre; could not gain

admission, and had to wait about a quarter of an hour in a public-house for the arrival of the housekeeper. Unpacked and dressed; though the rain poured down the house was very good, and I acted Virginius very well, and without any anger at all. It was very decently done; only Dentatus had put a surplice over his street clothes and put part of a sheep's fleece on his chin for a beard. Mr. Bennett paid me, and I came to the Star, where I read the paper.

May 14th.—At Pershore a Frenchman got into the coach, very good natured, and intelligent; he was taking specimens from his garden to contest some of the prizes at the horticultural meeting at Evesham. He settled in Worcestershire from its resemblance to Normandy; he mentioned that when an Englishman speaks French very well, so well as to deceive a Frenchman, his pronunciation approaches the Gascon dialect more closely than any other.

London, May 21st.—Called at Forster's chambers to arrange with him a visit to Mr. Maclise.

Accompanied Forster to Mr. Maclise's lodgings—found him a young, prepossessing, intelligent man, anxious to paint my picture. Saw his large one of Captain Rock, and several smaller of great merit. Agreed to sit to him.

May 22nd.—Went into Pall Mall to see the Titian's Venus, which is certainly a very good picture, whether copy or original. Walked into the gallery above, and saw some old things which I had seen with other and much more admiring eyes seventeen years ago. Passed on to Leicester Square to see David's pictures—was pleased with his Napoleon, his Andromache over Hector, and strongly impressed by his picture of the dead Marat; the details were too real and unredeemed to please, but it was a thing not to be forgotten.

To the Olympic to see Jenny Vertpré act in 'La Petite Fille' and 'Le Jeune et la Vieille.' Was quite delighted with her charming and finished personation.

May 23rd.—Note from H. Smith, acquainting me with a message from M. Cloup, the director of the French company, regretting he had not known of my visit that he might have offered me a box, and wishing to know if the speculation would answer at Bath; a note from Bunn, stating that he had called yesterday. Dined with Mr. Warren, where I met Mr.

Brockedon, whose acquaintance I desired to make. Passed a very cheerful afternoon.

May 26th.—After some resolutions to go, and not to go, I put an end to all hesitation by dressing myself and setting out for town. I read part of second volume of 'Van Artevelde' on my way, which delights me very much, and teaches not a little. Copied out some memoranda of anecdotes, which I thought worth keeping; wrote a note inclosing cards of invitation to Fonblanque, which I sent with one to Lardner. Sent also notes to Bunn and Beetham, apprising them of my stay in town this week.

Went to Dr. Lardner's: met Mrs. Shelley, Miss Sheridan, Lord Adare, Colonel and Mrs. Stanhope, Mr. and Mrs. Norton, Fonblanque and Miss Keene. I could not look at Mrs. Norton without looking long—her face is one to think of.

Saw the Sheils, Hayward, O'Hanlon (who told me that the French of my note to Vertpré was much better than the English), Martin, to whom I was introduced, Lady Seymour and I think Mrs. Blackwood, Babbage. Mrs. Norton, on going away, returned to find me, and expressed her wish to see me at her house.

May 27th.—Made 'Van Artevelde' my breakfast companion. Talfourd objects to the second volume, and seems almost to feel his—Artevelde's—love for Elena a pollution of his own heart and a wrong to the memory of Adriana. I do not feel it so. We are human beings; the heart of man cannot endure a state of solitude and bereavement: it is not that alone which is loveable that induces us to love, the disposition to love is part of our being, we lean towards something with a natural yearning, and if we find it not we weaken or grow hard in selfish purpose. To live alone a man must be either brutal or divine, as Bacon tells us, and what loneliness is like that of a desolated heart? I feel, in Artevelde's love for Elena, that it is a pillow on which he rests his heart, bruised and somewhat weakened by its affliction and desert state, and wearied with the cares, from which hope slowly is detaching itself, that have no other solace. What a charming book it is! Forster called in, and wished me to write a review of Miss F. Kemble's book; but I cannot conceal the fact from myself, that I cannot write now for the public. I have been left behind in the

world's march. It is not vanity that makes me case myself in pride, but a consciousness of not having won a secure title to distinction, and the nervous and unquiet apprehension of its being questioned.

May 28th.—Called on Bunn in Prince's Place; talked long on other matters, and at length came to the point of our meeting, and agreed on next season's engagement: £30 unsubtracted; four nights per week; half a benefit; 'Bridal'* on usual terms; three weeks' vacation, last of Lent. Which I pray to God may be fortunate and prosperous.

May 30th.—Took cab to St. James's Square and called on Lardner at Windham Club; found Mr. Donovan with him, a chemist; accompanied them to a lamp shop in Regent Street, where I saw a curious French lamp and heard of one by Donovan to burn naphtha. Went in the coach to call on Mrs. Norton; found Lord Castlereagh in the drawing-room, who stared, as I, entrenching myself in my democratic pride, did again. We waited some little time, when Mrs. Norton appeared, dressed for a walk; she introduced us and, after a little chat wherein we heard of the duel between Lord Seymour and Sir Colquhoun Grant, we ended our short visit, and took the way to Malibran, on whom we left cards.

Sunday, May 31st.—Arose most unwillingly. After several efforts dressed, and went to Dr. Elwin, where I met at breakfast his family and brother, the artist. How much I have occasion to lament each day of my life, not having paid attention to my mode of delivering in common conversation: my hesitation and want of clearness in the expression of my ideas is a serious blemish. He took me to the Unitarian Chapel, South Street, where Mr. Fox† preached. His prayer was fervent and wide in its charitable application as the world itself; he ended with the Lord's Prayer, which he repeated well. His sermon or lecture, for there was no text—was on the influence of those arts connected with the imagination, upon religious feeling. The effect was conviction. The truth of his proposition was as manifest as those sublime and beautiful works of the Creator, from which he borrowed his noble and illustrative imagery. To attempt to record the

* The dramatic copyright of the 'Bridal' belonged to Macready.—Ed.

† Afterwards M.P. for Oldham.—Ed.

eloquent arguments, definitions, and descriptions would be idle; I have much of the subject-matter in my mind, but not arranged, nor in those words that burned, and kindled my enthusiasm as no speaker ever did before. It was everything that the exponent of a religious and a philosophic system of worship should be. He sent to express his wish to see me, and I was conducted to the vestry, where I thanked him, and promised to let him know when I could dine with him to meet the author of 'Cosmo.'

Went to Forster's to dine. Met. Stanfield, Bulwer, Fonblanque, Blanchard, Talfourd, Howard, Maclise, Cattermole, Procter, Leigh Hunt, T. Fonblanque, Price. Pleasant day.

Howard wanted me to go to Lady Blessington's, but was not dressed.

Elstree, June 5th.—Continued my perusal of 'The Provost of Bruges,' and deliberated much upon it, when I finished it. The language is not up to that high pitch of imagination, sentiment, or passion which ever seems to approach the sublime, but it is seldom low, generally natural, oftentimes forcible, and not unfrequently tender and pathetic. I am inclined to attribute its chief merit to its situation, which still is a great merit.

June 9th.—Letter from Bulwer at some length, excusing himself from dining here on Sunday. One expression in his letter I disliked—the "honour of my acquaintance." My acquaintance can be no honour to such a man as Bulwer, and it almost seems like irony.

Read over Lord Byron's 'Foscari,' which does not seem to me to contain the power, or rather the variety and intensity of passion which many of his other plays do.

June 12th.—Began to read 'Marino Faliero,' but read it drowsily. I wish I could think it dramatic, at present I do not.

London, June 13th.—Called at Garrick Club. Planché proposed to me the half of the Adelphi Theatre. I could not give up my whole self to the employment of conducting it, and if I did not, it would not answer.

June 17th.—(*Literary Fund Dinner.*) Thought upon what I ought to say at the dinner—and dressed for it—Dr. Lardner called for me, and we went. I saw Wyse, whom I liked much, Christie, French, Emerson Tennent. The whole proceedings of

the day were dull and wearisome with the exception of Wilkie's speech, in which he noticed the connection of literature and art; and the Turkish Attaché, who in acknowledgment of the compliment paid to him in drinking his health, rose and gulped down a bumper of wine, then sat down. Urquhart, his cicerone, spoke very well, but in a low tone of voice. Lord Teignmouth spoke pretty well, and Murchison fairly. On paying my subscription, Mr. Snow told me that my name was in the list of toasts. This decided me. I feel unequal from the want of habit, and the uncertainty of my position. I read in every newspaper of this week, that my art is a very humble one—if indeed it be an art at all—and that its professors are entitled to little respect: and here, when in courtesy I am admitted as *Mr. Macready* among the esquires of the Royal Academy, the King's Printing Office, the Quarterly Review, &c., &c., I am to speak without the possibility of knowing what place is allowed me as an artist, or what degree of particular consideration may be extended to me as a man consistent in his private conduct.

June 18th.— Is it twenty years since, in Greenock, I waited with anxiety the particular return of the dead and wounded from the Battle of Waterloo—wishing to be certified of dear Edward's safety?

June 19th.—Went out, saw the Panorama of Thebes. Was struck with the advantage, in this refined age, that we possess in the exact images of those remote objects of which we read with so much interest; our imagination is enriched with precise ideas of things and places, on which our untravelled forefathers could have had but very vague and uncertain conjectures from description. Can almost believe that I have seen those mighty monuments, the eternal mountains that looked upon their erection and still overlook their state of ruin—the teeming river, rich in the associations and visions of the past as in the real bounties of Nature at this very period. Saw Jerusalem, and was disgusted with the various spots assigned to the words and actions of our Saviour, tending more to shake belief than all the scoffs and invectives of scepticism. Called on Greaves and Bulwer, leaving cards with each. Passed on to the collection of Rubens' drawings, the property of Sir T. Lawrence, with which I was truly delighted. I did

not think he had such power of pencil: they did not *want* what some critics say was Rubens' only quality of excellence, colour. Called on Sarti and ordered casts.

June 24th.—My thanks are due to Almighty God, and gratefully they are offered, for the large share of happiness with which it has been His bountiful will to bless me. That it has not been greater, though certainly very great in comparison with my fellow-men, has been the fault of my own indiscretion, misusing and vexing with vain imaginations the real good in my power. I acknowledge and bless His goodness, and fervently pray that He will so strengthen and quicken my resolutions to improve my mind, and labour in my calling for my dear children's welfare, that I may be enabled to educate them in His faith, fear, and love, and present in their amiable and virtuous lives some atoning plea for mercy to their parent's errors.

In thinking on what are our real enjoyments in life, I am disposed to come to the conclusion that no possession can very long be in itself a source of pleasure; action is the real gratification to man, and how wisely ordained that it should be so.

> "The food of hope
> Is meditated action; robbed of this,
> Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
> We perish also."
>
> Wordsworth's *Excursion.*

June 26th.—Letter from Mr. ——. The suggestion of a monument to Shakespeare's mother (query, why not Shakespeare's grandmother); he is illiterate and unfortunately vain. I wish it were otherwise, as he professes to model himself upon me.

To York, July 4th.—Read a notice on the life and writings of La Fontaine prefixed to his works—was very much pleased with it; thought it so abounding with well-expressed and instructive truths as well as amusing anecdotes, that I resolved to give another reading to it. There is one passage which, however willing my vanity may be to echo, my judgment cannot assent to: "La gloire, pour ceux même qui en sont les plus dignes, et qui font tout pour l'obtenir, est une espèce de jeu de hasard, où ce qu'on appelle *le bonheur* n'est pas moins nécessaire que la science et l'adresse. Tacite observe même, qu'il y a des hommes auxquels il tient lieu de vertus." It would soothe my wounded self-love to think this, and to console myself for my

own insignificance on the theatre of life with passages like this and that beautiful one with which the character of Van Artevelde opens, but it is a dangerous principle to admit, giving too much to chance. The accidents of birth and fortune are no doubt great, particularly in this country, but where there is life and death, well exercised talent will gain its true ascendancy. I feel the heavy weight of censure I lay upon myself in this admission, but I must make it.

London, July 5th.—Went to the Garrick Club, where I dined.

Forster asked me to accompany him to Talfourd's, to which I agreed. We spent the evening there. Talfourd took me into the other drawing-room and, talking over 'Ion,' expressed his firm resolve that no one should act the character but myself. I shall therefore address myself to it. Talfourd walked home part of the way with Forster and myself.

Elstree, July 7th.—Began again Brougham's 'Discourse on Natural Theology;' read two sections of it, with which I was really charmed. The sublime wideness of design throughout the universe he adduces in the simplest language, and applies the reasoning by which they were made known in the most logical and, in my mind, most convincing manner, to demonstrate the "Great First Cause." It is valuable for the religious feeling that is excited or rekindled within us by the wonderful wisdom and beneficence of the Creator, which he with the mere eloquence of truth puts forward.

July 8th.—Took a vegetable dinner, and looked through Potter's translation of Sophocles' 'Œdipus,' to try Sheil's suggestion of my performance of Œdipus. It could not be presented, I think, to give pleasure.

July 9th.—Walked in garden. Read, accidentally, that beautiful passage, "O fortunati nimium" of Virgil, ending the second Georgic. What a succession of busy and beautiful images, what soothing ideas of tranquillity and enjoyment, what agreeable sentiments concealed beneath the conditions of life he brings under review! How much delight is added to existence in the power of following and clearly depicting to oneself the imaginings of the poets of our own and other languages! Did not feel well; apprehend my diet of vegetables and fruit has been too abruptly entered upon.

Read and practised, but languidly, for two hours and a half, reading Milton, Chatham's speeches, and rehearsing Hamlet. Letters from Bunn, agreeing to my terms, excepting three weeks additional. Answered him, relinquishing the three weeks. Again in the garden at the arbutus-tree, after dinner. Looked at the Encyclopædia, endeavouring to understand the differential and integral calculus, which I cannot. How strange it is that before I was ten, I think, I was learning algebra and was particularly quick in arithmetic, and now literally know nothing of it.

Sunday, July 19th.—Was much struck with the prayer of Plato, quoted in the notes to Milton.

Delighted with the morning thanksgiving and prayer of Adam and Eve, which is quite touching in its fervour and beauty. Went to afternoon church. Read the last book of the 'Excursion.' It is difficult for me to express the grateful and reverential feelings with which I think of its author. Milton elevates, thrills, awes, and delights me—but Wordsworth, "alluring to higher worlds" by their types on earth, kindles anew my expiring fervour, strengthens my hope, and reconciles me to myself. He comforts me; he makes me anxious to be virtuous, and strengthens my resolution to try to be so.

July 22nd.—I read a little more of Boswell, which is certainly, for this kind of casual reading, a most delightful book.

July 23rd.—Began to interleave a prompt-book of 'Riches,' not to waste time. My books arrived from the binder's, and Mr. Lovell sent me 'The Provost of Bruges,' altered, with a note. Went out to walk in the garden, where I laboured efficiently for the garden and myself in above two hours of good exercise; the evening was beautiful. Coming in, read through most attentively 'The Provost of Bruges,' which, although the requisite pains have not been bestowed on the alterations, is in my mind very much improved.

Wrote to Mr. Lovell my opinions upon it, and inquired of him his wishes. Completed the interleaving of the play of 'Riches;' have not been idle to-day, thank God.

July 27th.—In Milton I read the encounter of Abdiel with Satan, and the shock of the angelic armies—how much to be regretted, that a play of words should intervene to check the

tide of admiration on which we are borne along by this noble book! Began reading in earnest passages of 'Hamlet,' but could not give more than an hour to it; this I much regret, and must lay aside all other studies for that, on which with me so much depends. After dinner read through the play of 'The Bridal,' which I may place ready, as I do not see where I am to improve it.

Walked for exercise about two hours in the garden, enjoying the air, and fragrance, and foliage.

July 29th.—Took up 'Corinne,' and read, and read, until dinner and after dinner, that attractive book, so rich in beautiful imaginations, so true in its pointed inferences. Had some time to give to the various workmen, but ever with 'Corinne' in my hand. Was obliged in the afternoon to put my handkerchief over my head and fairly try to sleep off my heaviness. I lost this day from striving to make too much of it, and yet I ate no meat, and but sparingly of my vegetable dinner. Worked for upwards of two hours in the garden.

July 30th.—Calcraft arrived, and agreed to give me £210 for eight nights, which I accepted.

August 2nd.—Read 'Corinne' until the galloping of horses past the gate gave me assurance of the arrival of my guests. We dined—Forster, Maclise, and self—and adjourned to the summer-house at Forster's request, where we talked over the witches of 'Macbeth' and the subject for a picture. My own opinion and suggestion was in favour of figures, but no face except the portrait, and Forster seemed to coincide with me; but Mr. Maclise did not feel the power of exerting the imagination by giving passion to the figure and concealing the face. I think him wrong. At Forster's request read some of the scenes of 'Bertulphe.'

[*August 8th* to *19th*, Engagement at Dublin.]

Dublin, August 9th.—Calcraft mentioned to me the behaviour of D'Aguilar in the case of Lady ——, which I think highly to his honour. When Lady Haddington refused to receive her, Colonel D'Aguilar requested his wife to call on her, and made a large party for her. She was met by Lady Blakeney, &c, &c., who all invited her, thinking it a hard case, after twenty-five years, to publish her disgrace to her own daughters, who were before unacquainted with it.

August 13*th.*—Went to the theatre, and acted Hamlet to an audience extremely difficult to provoke to applause. I thought that I must have lacked spirit and earnestness in the first act, at which I was vexed, and took all the pains I could with the remainder of the play, but I acted under a sense of effort and a supposition of deficient sympathy in the auditors. The best passages in my mind were the affected madness with Ophelia, and the closet scene. I must not give it up. I must also study my appearance as well as my acting in it.

August 16*th.*—To Christ Church, where I was taken to the organ gallery—a most unenviable post of distinction—and was gratified with the Te Deum, Jubilate, and anthem (Haydn) by the Dublin choir: the performance was admirable. The sermon by Archdeacon Mansel was very bad. Remembered the time when I first went into this church, a boy of ten years old, with my grandfather, as common councilman, and the mayor, &c. Thought on the years that had passed—thirty-two—and the changes they had made. Mused upon the religion of the congregation before me brought here to listen to the music and to look at each other—and this is devotion! Looked at Strongbow's tomb, and the bent roof of the church.

August 17*th.*—We drove in the carriage, which called for us at the Assembly House, William Street, in consequence of a note sent to me by Mrs. Macready, telling me I could take the oaths for my *freedom.* Received great courtesy from the persons there, but was obliged to wait so long, that it became necessary to go to the Phœnix Park first, and return to William Street. I accordingly agreed to return in an hour, and we drove through the park to the Lodge. It is a very pretty place—how convenient it must be to be a Lord Lieutenant! I wrote my name, but my hand was so unsteady, it was scarcely legible, so I added my card to the written name. Came back to William Street, where I was ushered before the Lord Mayor, and, abjuring Popery and many absurd bugbears, took the oaths to become a *Freeman of the City of Dublin;* the Mayor, a young man, whom I suppose to be Morrisson, Junior, was very civil and accommodating.

Elstree, August 23*rd.*—Letters from Forster, informing me that Mathews' pictures had been bought by Mr. Durrant for the Garrick Club; from Marianne Skerrett, mentioning the

intention of Hetta and herself to travel with separate parties to Naples to endeavour to see their Uncle Matthias, whose health was very precarious. The *Examiner*, which I read, records his death. I knew him; he was of a kind and courteous disposition, of more acquirement than genius, and living latterly upon the reputation of having had a reputation from the 'Pursuits of Literature,' which his Italian translations and complimentary sonnets did not enhance or support. Walked in the garden, and felt again the tranquil pleasure of being at home and with my dear family.

August 26th.—Wrote a prayer for my dear children, wishing them clearly to understand what they ask for, and of Whom they asked it, as far at least as the limits of their understanding would allow them; and being desirous that their prayer should be a still recurring memorial of their duties and obligations, and a sort of code to refer to for their immediate conviction on their infringement of any of its injunctions. Listened again to their lessons, and again took some pains to enforce my plan of making their lessons convey positive and practical knowledge.

August 31st.—Made out the draught of my engagement with Mr. Bunn upon the terms agreed on between us, and the list of plays accompanying it, in order that I might not be taken by surprise.

September 2nd.—Finished the sixth book of Milton, and went over the third act of 'Macbeth.' My object is to increase the power and vigour of my performance, and to subdue all tendency to exaggeration of gesture, expression, and deportment, to make more simple, more chaste, and yet more forcible and real the passions and characters I have to portray. After dinner indulged in rioting and disciplining in sport my children (for thus I make them companions to myself, and teach them to "know as a friend," while I can gently check any disposition to wrong which may appear in them). Then sat down to read over attentively, and endeavour to reduce into an acting form and dimensions, Talfourd's sweet tragic poem of 'Ion,' which I accomplished, though it occupied more time than I anticipated. I expect to find him refractory on some points—and where some of the most poetical passages are omitted, it is difficult to persuade an author that the effect of the whole is improved; but imagery and sentiment will not supply the place of action.

September 3rd.—Practised and considered Macbeth through the morning. Received a very kind letter from Marianne Skerrett, just about to sail from Portsmouth for Havre on her way to Italy.

Went again through 'Ion,' still cutting, "still destroying." Read 'Ion' to Catherine and Letitia, who were both affected by it; but it still needs reduction in some of the speeches.

Sunday, September 6th.—Went to afternoon service with Letitia. Read prayers to the family. Why, if religious observances be unimportant, should the attention to them give me, who disapprove of the unapostolic, unsatisfying mode in which they are ministered, such soothing and complacent feelings?

September 9th.—Practised part of Othello, to which I do not find I yet give that real pathos and terrible fury which belongs to the character.

Read over attentively the whole of 'Melantius.' I do not much fancy it.

London, September 21st.—Bunn came, and the business of my plays and engagement was discussed. He said "'The Bridal' was a pet of mine." I told him "No; that I wished to make it a means of remuneration without loading the theatre with additional salary, and I only regarded it as additional to my income." 'Ion,' he agreed, should be read by me to himself and others, and that he would then come to a judgment on its performance, without at present pledging himself to act it. 'Bertulphe' he had decided on not hearing read, and I agreed to write to the author and gain his consent to give it to him.

We read over the engagement, making the time of 'The Bridal' Christmas instead of the spring, signed and interchanged it, I speaking about room and flesh-stockings. On consideration gave him 'The Provost of Bruges,' reading him one passage in it.

Elstree, September 25th.—Studied Othello, which I find difficult—the management and economy of my time and force. How little do they know of this art who think it is easy!

London, September 30th.—(*Drury Lane.*) Left my dear home to begin this eventful season, in entering upon which I earnestly ask God's blessing upon my efforts, and that I may receive and deserve success by my care and industry; or, if it be the Almighty's will that I should be rebuked by ill-fortune, I humbly

and heartily pray to Him for strength and wisdom to bear it well, and to turn it to good.

October 1st.—Went to the theatre, played ill (Macbeth), I must presume, because ineffectively; and yet I never tried so much to play well, and never, never was it of so much importance to me to play well. The audience called for me—a kindness on their part—and I went on, but when Talfourd, Forster, and Walron came to my room, not one had a word of comfort or congratulation. What have I omitted to make this evening successful? I do not know, but the bitterness of my feelings is such, with the anticipation of the newspapers to-morrow, that if I had not ties which bind me down to this profession (and I could curse the hour that it was suggested to me), I would eat a crust, or eat nothing, rather than play in it. I scarcely recollect when my feelings have been so wrought up to a state of agonizing bitterness as to-night; I feel almost desperate.

October 2nd.—I cannot remember—it may be because the exact recollections of our sufferings cannot be preserved amid the multitudes of feelings that sweep over them—but I cannot call to mind more than one evening of my whole life which brought to me more acute distress than yesterday's. The stake of my future life was upon it, for speedy profit or, perhaps, poverty, and it is lost! I cannot charge myself with neglect; I really applied to my task, and bent my mind down to it: my mistake was in not demanding an opening character, and making that one in which I could feel myself independent of the humour of the audience (which I do not accuse) or of the strangeness of the theatre. I could not touch any refreshment; I threw myself on the sofa, and lay there in a state of mind than an enemy would have pitied. In a reckless, hopeless fever of thought I went to bed, and dropped asleep with my candle on my pillow; I awoke to see the danger, which was really very great. I slept again for a short time, and awoke to pass most of the remainder of the night in an agony of despondent fretfulness and sad anticipations. Arose very little better; my bath composed my spirits a little, and *The Times* newspaper, which, though not highly laudatory, was not written in an unkind spirit, gave me back some portion of my wonted tranquillity. The other papers were very cold; I sent them with a letter to my dear Catherine.

October 5th.—Went to theatre, and in acting Macbeth felt that I carried my audience along with me. I was earnest, majestic, and impassioned. The applause was enthusiastic, and I was obliged to go on at the close of the play. I redeemed myself, and most grateful do I feel in saying "Thank God." Talfourd came into my room, and said he had "never seen me finer, if indeed I had ever played it so well."

Wallace asked "Why the d—l didn't I play it so on Thursday?" Tried on dress for Hamlet.

October 7th.—Acted Hamlet, to judge by the continued interest and the uniform success of all the striking passages, better than I ever played it before. Forster and Wallace came into my room; the former thought it, as a whole, the best he had ever seen; Wallace told me afterwards that he would have been "satisfied with less effect."

October 10th.—Asked Bunn for a private box for Mrs. Spurgin, to which he assented, and I procured the ticket. Settled also about my salary, that in receiving £10 for the first half-week I was to receive £35 for the last. Dunn and Jones were present.

October 12th.—Went to the theatre, and acted Macbeth before Her Majesty and a full house. The audience did not come solely and purposely to see 'Macbeth,' and the labour to keep their attention fixed was extreme. Wallace came round and said I acted very well: I tried to do so, but am not confident of my success. Talfourd and Forster came to my room. Bunn told me he must do 'Othello' on Thursday. I said "*I* could not." He "must." I "would not." He sent me up a note to know which I would do, Othello or Iago, on Thursday. I returned for answer, Iago, and would not do Othello at all. He then sent Cooper* to me, to whom I said the same, and in answer to his inquiry said, "I would not do Othello under a week's notice." He left me without fixing anything. I was very much fatigued. Talfourd suggested the propriety of ascertaining the intentions of the management, and I waited for Cooper; while speaking to him Bunn came up, and wished me to go into the room and talk it over. He was as civil as a dog, the dragooning attempt had failed; and after some conversation 'Othello' was fixed for Wednesday week, and 'The Provoked Husband' for Thursday next.

* Then stage manager at Drury Lane.—Ed.

October 15*th.*—Went to theatre, and acted Lord Townley in a very mediocre manner, occasionally with spirit, but with an utter absence of finish and high deportment. Spoke to Cooper on hearing of its intended repetition on Saturday, and told him that I could not do Othello on Wednesday if my time were thus taken from me.

October 16*th.*—Was introduced by Bunn to Mr. Joseph Parkes, whom I had long wished to know.

Went to theatre and acted Hamlet, not as I did the last time—I felt then the inspiration of the part; to-night I felt as if I had a load upon my shoulders. The actors said I played well. The audience called for me and made me go forward. Wallace, Forster, and H. Smith, who came into my room, all thought I played well—but I did not. I was not satisfied with myself—there was effort, and very little free flow of passion.

October 21*st.*—Went to the theatre, and felt very nervous and unsettled; reasoned with myself, and partially recovered my self-possession; but, in truth, was hurried out in the part of Othello, and was not perfectly possessed of it. The criticism I passed on Malibran's Fidelio will exactly suit my own Othello—it was "elaborate, but not abandoned." In the early scenes I was abroad, making effort, but not feeling my audience; in the jealous scenes I had attention, and certainly had no reason to be discontented by the degree of intelligence, skill, or effort shown by Iago;* but the audience seemed to wait for Kean's points, and this rather threw me off my balance. In the soliloquy after Iago's exit I in some degree asserted myself, and though not up to my own expectations in the "Farewell," &c., yet, in the grand burst, I carried the house with me. From that point I should say the performance averaged good, but was not in any, except that one outbreak, great.

October 29*th.*—Lay very late, thinking over the play of last night (Othello), and revolving in my mind the slow and comparatively unprofitable advance of my reputation; the danger it runs from the appearance of every new aspirant, and the reluctant admissions that are made to it. Walked in the garden, and inhaled, with grateful and tranquil pleasure, the pure air of the country.

* Vandenhoff was Iago, Cooper was Cassio, and Harley, Roderigo; Mrs. Yates was the Desdemona, and Miss E. Tree the Emilia.—Ed.

November 2nd.—Mr. Yates * wished to speak to me before I left the theatre; I went to his room after the play was finished. I soon perceived which way the conversation was pointing. It appeared from his showing that Mr. Bunn had no funds to carry on the concern if it failed, and that the proprietors, to meet the effect of the Covent Garden reduced prices, had agreed to let one-third of the rent stand over till Christmas if the actors would do the same with their salaries; and to me, in the first instance, the proposal was made.

He said that I was underpaid in proportion to the other salaries. I said I knew that, but did not murmur at it; I would think of his proposal, and see him on Wednesday.

November 5th.—Went to dine with F——. Hope, the Cattermoles, and Forster dined there; Hayward, N. P. Willis and bride, and some other unknowns came in the evening. The day was to me cheerful and pleasant, but I was an instance of the bad effect, which Bulwer judiciously observes in 'Pelham,' of holding an argument in mixed society. I liked my host and hostess very much, and the guests. I felt much amused, and indeed gratified. Mrs. F—— sang some very sweet and touching songs, the words by her husband, the music by herself. It was strange that as I gazed on her, receiving and imparting pleasure, my imagination presented me her form in death—the hands actively pressing music from the instrument, stark and cold, and the lips rigid and pale, that now poured forth such touching sounds. Hayward introduced me to Willis, with whom I chatted of America. Note from Talfourd, who "assumes that 'Ion' is to be acted."

November 10th.—(*Sale of the Granby.*) Looked over 'The Souvenir' till Mr. Powell's arrival in the afternoon. He produced the papers, and on ascertaining the time of the bank's closing, we went in a cab to the city, where I received from Willis and Co. £2000 on account of Mr. Benn. Returning to chambers, signed the different papers of surrender and mortgage, and received the title-deeds, &c. Holding a straw, the other end of which was held by Mr. Powell (according to the usage of the Forest of Knaresborough), I made the declaration of surrender, went over the list of title-deeds, and, all being right, and having vainly

* Acting manager at Drury Lane.—Ed.

invited Mr. Powell to Elstree, and written him orders, he took leave.

Elstree, November 16*th.*—Intended to take a long walk, but recollecting that my firearms were in a very bad condition, I took them down, and found them quite wet in the barrels. Read, in 'L'Allemagne,' the chapter on Schiller's 'Robbers' and 'Don Carlos,' in which were some observations on Shakespeare that are most just, and show her, Madame de Staël, equally well acquainted with our great poet as with those of other countries. Tried my pistols, &c. Continued after dinner my perusal of 'Wallenstein,' which, for grand and natural thoughts, and intimate development of character, may rank with the first specimens of dramatic poetry. Went over the last act of 'Bertulphe.'

November 21*st.*—Rising, I felt the peculiarity of my situation as regards my profession—quite interdicted from its exercise during the greater part, if not the entire of the season, and all the hopes of profit from new characters, upon the strength of which I made this engagement, utterly falsified. There seems a destiny which constantly prevents me from reaching that happy point of success which will give recompense to my labour. Like the Hebrew liberator, I see the promised land, but am not permitted to possess it. I do not on that account complain of my fate, or lose my energies in despondency. On the contrary, I resolve that I will not yield to this untoward pressure of circumstances. I will diligently persevere in my work of improvement, and endeavour to turn my leisure to rich account, "waiting the event of time," and thankful for what I enjoy.

November 23*rd.*—Intending to read, I put my books out, but began to talk over my affairs and prospects: the probability of making a successful experiment of the drama at the Lyceum, under a new name, and a proprietary of performers, the best of each class, formed into a supervising committee, and receiving, over and above their salaries, shares in proportion to their rank of salary, and percentage proportionate to their respective advances of money. Talked over the plan (which seemed practicable and promising, if Farren could be bound down) the whole morning. The present desperate condition of the drama makes some step necessary, if it is to be a care

and concern to me; but for my own fame, except inasmuch as my blessed children's welfare depends on it, I am comparatively indifferent—I want the means of educating them.

Walked into the fields, taking the two puppies with me. Returned to the subject of myself and my destiny. Calculated what the actual gain of this year would be, as a guide to my future measures; found that from £200 to £300 would be the extent of this year's profit, and that my income, by the sale of the Granby, is diminished by £132. If I am to educate my children, how am I to have the means with such a surplusage?—how can I speculate at my present period of life? There is no resource for me but America.

November 24th.—Read the first chapter of the 'History of the Jews,' which affords a curious specimen of the want of sincerity that *primâ facie* appears in the attempt of Milman to reconcile things out of Nature's course with probability. He is evidently incredulous or unconvinced, and yet he endeavours to make it thought that he subscribes to the detail of the miraculous, where miraculous agency is not needed, and where the Almighty can, as He ever does, work out His will by means, but not out of the order, of Nature.

November 27th.—Went from chambers to dine with Rev. William Fox, Bayswater. Met with him Mr. Home, author of 'Cosmo,' Miss Flower, who lives in the house with Mr. Fox and a little girl, his daughter. I like Mr. Fox very much; he is an original and profound thinker, and most eloquent and ingenious in supporting the penetrating views he takes. Mr. Robert Browning, the author of 'Paracelsus,' came in after dinner; I was very much pleased to meet him. His face is full of intelligence. My time passed most agreeably. Mr. Fox's defence of the suggestion that Lady Macbeth should be a woman of delicate and fragile frame pleased me very much, though he opposed me, and of course triumphantly. I took Mr. Browning on, and requested to be allowed to improve my acquaintance with him. He expressed himself warmly, as gratified by the proposal, wished to send me his book; we exchanged cards and parted.

December 7th.—Read 'Paracelsus,' a work of great daring, starred with poetry of thought, feeling, and diction, but

occasionally obscure: the writer can scarcely fail to be a leading spirit of his time.

Elstree, December 14th.—I was amused by the superstition of our servants. The cook observed that she turned the beds every day except Friday, then she only shook them; and Phillips hoped the pig would not be killed on Wednesday, as the fulling of the moon was not good for the bacon.

Sunday, December 20th.—Wrote a letter to Mr. Chalk, inclosing a cheque for £25, to be distributed in coals to the poor. Made up my accounts, and went with Mr. Ward to afternoon church. At the end of the service went with Mr. Chalk into the vestry, and gave him the letter, for which he thanked me, observing that he wished the practice was more general, and that he had an argument the other day with a person on the comparative merits of "faith" and "good works."

December 21st.—Finished Milman's 'History of the Jews.' Read the 'False Friend' of Vanbrugh — a play in which I fancied there was a contradiction to Pope's assertion that "Van never wanted wit." I could not discover it.

December 22nd.—How unworthy do I appear to myself when I reflect on the powers with which I was endowed, and attempt to make out the account of good that I have turned them to! The bulk of mankind, I incline to think, flies to a mediating and redeeming benevolence to silence the scruples of conscience and quiet the fears of an hereafter, where the awful questions of their deservings may be made. They avoid atonement in their proper selves, and repose upon the sacrifice which Christ made. Can this be enough? Reason scarce pauses to say No.

December 26th.—Read in Molière's 'Amphitryon,' which is amusing. How true is—

> "La foiblesse humaine est d'avoir
> Des curiosités d'apprendre,
> Ce qu'on ne voudroit pas savoir."

December 28th.—Wrote note to Mr. Farren, making an appointment with him for Saturday next, from which I look for no further result than the certification of the inutility of occupying my mind further with abortive schemes of regenerating the stage. To be assured is one step towards effecting something, even if not all we wish.

Read in Voltaire's 'Dictionnaire Philosophique' the articles, 'Evangile,' in which the grounds for deciding on the authenticity of the form now used is questioned; 'Eucharistie,' in which the doctrine of Transubstantiation is effectively ridiculed; 'Evêque,' a good satire on *Messieurs les Evêques:* exaggeration—good criticism. Finished the second act of Molière's 'Amphitryon;' the anger, and gradual relenting, with the graceful reconciliation of Alcmène is very charming.

December 30th.—After our early dinner read the newspaper, one side of which was occupied by the American President's speech. I read it through, and think that it is to be lamented that European countries cannot learn the lesson of self-government from our wiser and happier brothers of the West.

December 31st.—Frederick Reynolds arrived a little after 4 o'clock. Busied myself with "house affairs." Our other guests were Miss Kenney, Forster, Cattermole, Browning, and Mr. Munro. Mr. Browning was very popular with the whole party; his simple and enthusiastic manner engaged attention and won opinions from all present; he looks and speaks more like a youthful poet than any man I ever saw.

We poured out a libation as a farewell to the old year and a welcome to the new. The year is gone, and with it much of happiness, of care, and fear; I am so much older, and lament to say not much better, not much wiser. Let me offer up prayer to God Almighty, Who thus far has protected me and mine, to continue His gracious blessings on the dear heads of my beloved family, and to grant me health and energy to make them worthy disciples of Jesus Christ, and happy denizens of this our mortal state. Amen.

END OF VOL. I.

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